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Quick Team-Building Activities for Busy Managers: 50 Exercises That Get Results in Just 15 Minutes

by Brian

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Miller

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pages)



This text presents 50 fun, practical exercises for supervisors, managers, and team

leaders; the exercises cover dealing with change and its effects, keeping competition healthy and productive, recognizing efforts and accomplishments, and more.

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Back Cover

Every group can benefit from team-building exercises. But sometimes it's not practical to embark on a full-scale training initiative. Now, supervisors, managers, and team leaders have 50 team-building activities to choose from, all of which can be implemented with no special facilities, big expense, or previous training experience. Readers will find engaging exercises for:

- Building new teams and

helping teams with new members

- Dealing with change and its effects: anger, fear, frustration, and more
- Recognizing individual efforts and team accomplishments
- Finding creative ways to work together and solve problems
- Increasing and improving communication

- Leveraging diversity and individual differences to meet team goals
- Keeping competition healthy and productive within the team

Instructions and tips for follow-up and variations are included for each activity, and an additional chapter provides valuable advice for working through unexpected difficulties in team-building.

About the Author

Brian Cole Miller is the owner of Working Solutions, a management and training consultant firm whose clients include Nationwide Insurance, Mailboxes Etc., and Burger King. He is former director of training and development at Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Quick Team-Building Activities for Busy Managers—50 Exercises that Get Results in Just 15 Minutes

BRIAN COLE MILLER

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While working with one of my favorite clients in Maine, I ran into two busy managers within minutes of each other. They had similar requests of me. "Brian, can you give me a quick team-building activity? I want to do something to help my staff come together as a team, but we don't have a lot of time. Nothing 'touchy-feely.' Also, nothing that requires any materials or preparation, because I'm late for that staff meeting already!"

From those conversations came the idea for this book.

My thanks to the following busy

managers and professionals who made time to help me pull this book together: Bill Weirsma, Wendy Shaw, Dawn Snyder, Gary Siegerst, Brenda Rowe, Alex Rodriguez, Eileen Nunley, Dean Miller, Chris Lowe, Leslie Lampert, Lynn Jackson, Mark Hansen, Daina Gold, Kay Doucette, Joe Davey, Rick Damato, Sara Cope, Mylo Cope, Gail Cope, Caroline Cofer, Ed Buns, and Sarah Beaulieu.

The sources of these activities are numerous. I designed many myself. I modified others from existing games and activities. The rest I learned from others in the field, sometimes

as I participated at conferences and seminars. I apologize in advance to anyone I may have not credited for their activities.

Thank you Kiki, Margie, Rudy, Suzanne, Michael, and Jane for teaching me what teamwork is all about.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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(www.WorkingSolutionsOnline.com).

He has provided training, coaching, and consulting to clients that include Nationwide Insurance, Franklin Covey, Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, and UPS.

Introduction

This book is written for the busy manager who wants to add an element of team-building to a meeting. Here is what you can expect:

Every activity takes less than 15 minutes. Busy managers (and their staffs) do not have hours and hours to spend working on their team. They need activities that are quick and to the point. Each activity in this book will take less than 15 minutes to conduct and discuss.

Can you really get results in less

than 15 minutes? Yes, as long as your expectations are realistic. Longstanding issues will not be resolved. Age-old antagonists will not emerge as best friends. Major obstacles will not disappear. However, important team issues will be brought to light. Strangers will become acquaintances. Group norms will be established. Feelings will be validated. Camaraderie will be enhanced. In the end, a stronger team spirit will be fostered.

All activities can be done with only a few materials, or even none at all. You will not have to run to the store for odd materials to

conduct these activities. In fact, more than half of the activities require nothing more than pen and paper! The materials required for the rest of them are simple things often found at work, such as paper clips, markers, index cards, pennies, old magazines, and so forth. Only a few activities require special materials such as a deck of cards, balloons, or a puzzle.

Each activity has one or more specific, focused objectives.

Teambuilding activities are usually fun, and the ones in this book definitely are. Fun is not the primary focus of any activity in this book,

though. Each activity is designed to help your group come together as a team in one way or another. You can have fun while you learn and grow together!

A busy manager like you can run every activity here easily. They are simple to understand and easy to prepare for. Some of them can be conducted successfully moments after you read them for the first time. You can pick up this book on your way to a meeting and use an activity from it right then and there!

The outline for each activity is easy to follow. Each one is

presented in the same easy-to-read, bulleted format:

This is ... explains very briefly what the activity is.

The purpose is ... tells what the purpose or objective of the activity is.

Use this when ... gives you clues you should look for that will tell you if this is the right activity for the purpose you and your team are thinking about.

Materials you'll need ... tells you everything you will

need for the activity. Often, it's nothing!

Here's how ... outlines, step by step, how to conduct the activity.

For example ... illustrates how the activity may play out, so you get a good sense of what to expect on each one.

Ask these questions ... lists the best questions for each activity. These are used for the Debrief, the most important part of any

team-building activity. During this session, participants discuss what they learned from the activity and relate it to their behavior back on the job.

Tips for success ...

includes things that will help you run you activity more effectively.

Try these variations ...

offers variations on the activity that can be used to spice it up, slow it down, add a level of competition, or otherwise alter it for a

slightly different learning experience.

Relax, you will not find any of these types of activities here:

NO "fish bowl" activities in which only a few participants are actively involved while everyone else watches and critiques them.

NO role-plays where participants are given a fictitious role to act out or pretend.

NO demonstrations in which the leader makes a

point by demonstrating something while all the participants merely watch and then discuss.

NO outdoor activities

requiring large areas, nice weather, and physically fit participants.

NO handouts to prepare, copy, or distribute.

NO "touchy-feely"

activities in which participants have to touch each other a lot or share intimate thoughts and

feelings, activities that push the manager into the role of psychologist rather than activity leader.

Before we get to the activities, there are two chapters that will help you with *any* team-building activity you want to do.

The first chapter gives you start-to-finish instructions on how to run an effective team-building activity. We will discuss all three phases of the experience: before, during, and after the activity.

Before the activity, you will learn how to decide which

activity is best for you and your team. Why pick *any* activity when you can choose one designed specifically for your team's needs? Then learn how to plan and prepare for your activity (even if you have only 2 minutes in the elevator to do so!).

During the activity, you will learn how to set the activity up for success—giving clear instructions, getting your participants to want to take part in it, and making sure they know what to do and

how to do it. Then learn what you should do while they are engaged. Finally, you will learn how to conduct the most important element of your activity: the Debrief. This is when your participants connect what they did in the activity with their behavior on the job. If you skip this step, you may as well not even have performed the activity!

After the activity, you will learn how to make the things learned during the activity come alive in the workplace

and make sure you and your team truly benefit from having done the activity in the first place.

Then, in the next chapter, we will look at what could go wrong in an activity. Murphy's law dictates that you will eventually hit a bump or two, but that does not mean you have to fail!

The format for each potential problem is the same:

What if ... describes the potential problem or concern you may face.

What you'll see ... indicates what you will actually see and hear that tell you this problem has come up.

The most likely causes ... identifies what usually causes such a problem. Only when you know the cause can you take meaningful action to avoid the problem altogether or deal with it more effectively.

How to prevent this from happening ... gives ideas on how you can avoid the problem happening in the

first place.

What to do if it happens anyway ... offers suggestions on how to handle the problem if it actually does happen (despite your best preventive efforts!).

Team-building with your staff can be fun, rewarding, and productive. Seeing those creative sparks as your staff learns something important can be very exciting. Stick with it, be patient, and you will see great results after even just a few activities!

Part I: Getting Ready

Chapter List

Chapter 1: How to Run a Successful Team-Building Activity

Chapter 2: What Could Go Wrong in a Team-Building Activity

Chapter 1: How to Run a Successful Team-Building Activity

Step 1. Before: Select an activity that's good for your team.

The best team-building *activity* can become the worst team-building *experience* when there is no clear objective. Why spend the time, effort, and money on an activity if you can't identify the business reason or team benefit you expect as a result? If all you want is to have some fun and kill some time, play a parlor game and enjoy. But if you want to improve your team's effectiveness, you need to select an activity that will give you your

desired results!

Start with a clear objective in mind. What, specifically, do you want your team to learn or accomplish? Think about it. Your goal should be:

- Attainable by your team.
- Relevant and applicable to where they are as a team right now.
- Something that will be reinforced long after this activity.

Plan on this activity being one of

many small steps your team will start taking now. Remember, an effective team is built primarily on trust. Trust, and thus team-building, can rarely be accomplished in one giant leap.

Match your goal to the activity in this book that will best help you get the results you want. If there is more than one good match, do one activity now and another one at a later date.

Competition can be a good thing. It can excite, energize and challenge

people to
participate better
Do not assume
competition
naturally brings
the best in
everyone, though
It can also deflate
discourage, and
create
unnecessary
lingering conflict
As the final judge
competitive
activities, you risk
becoming "the k
guy" as well. So

A NOTE ON COMPETITION:

only you can say how competitive you want your team-building activity to be. The most important thing is to be deliberate in your decision, so you can justify it with a clear objective if necessary.

Consider:

- The current level of competition within the

team.

- The emotional health of the participants in dealing with defeat.
- How intimidation or intimidation the participants are.

- Your ability to diffuse real conflict among the team members

Step 2. Before: Prepare for your team-building activity.

You want to make sure you are ready for everyone to have a great learning experience. Fifteen minutes of planning and preparation ahead of time may not guarantee success, but it will certainly help you prevent disaster. Your activity will be most effective if you go into it feeling competent and confident.

Read through the entire activity several times. Make sure you are clear on what is to happen and

when, why, and how. Visualize that activity happening successfully.

Obtain all necessary materials.

Check the materials to make sure they will work well for the activity. For example, see that the dates on the pennies are legible, test the markers for any that have dried out, make sure there are no cards missing from the deck, and so forth. Assume nothing! Always have a few extras on hand, just in case.

Practice what you are going to say when you start the activity with your team. The best way to do this is to explain the activity to a

friend or colleague. If he or she doesn't understand you, figure out a way to explain things more clearly until he or she does.

If the activity requires you to have a role (card dealer, judge, moderator, etc.), practice your comments or actions. This will help you feel less nervous during the activity. It will also free your mind to focus on more important things (the participants' reactions, the participants' learning, your own observations, etc.) during the activity.

Set up the room. Make sure the

tables, chairs, flipcharts, and/or other items are placed so that they contribute to the activity's success. A class-room style row of chairs is usually the least conducive to team-building activities. Better choices include a large circle, a "U" shape, or small table groups (several individuals gathered around each table). Any specific setup information required for an activity is noted within that activity.

If the activity's rules or steps are lengthy, write them ahead of time, and post them on the wall so everyone can see them

throughout the activity.

Anticipate potential problems.

Visualize the activity with *your* team, in *your* location. Ask yourself what could go wrong. Take action to prevent those problems from occurring and/or plan the corrective actions you can take if they do occur. The most common problems and how to avoid or deal with them are discussed in the [next chapter](#).

Step 3. During: Explain the activity to the team.

A 1-minute introduction can make all the difference in setting your team up for success! People engage better when they know *why* they are doing something. They also participate better when they understand all the rules up front, and when they are clear on exactly what is expected of them.

Set the mood. Welcome the team with enthusiasm and optimism. Team-building is fun! Convey this right away. You don't have to be a

cheerleader; even a smile or a warm comment will let your team know they are in for a great time.

Explain what the activity is. Give a very brief overview of what you have planned, so the team can start getting interested and excited.

Explain why you are doing this particular activity. Share with the team what you hope to accomplish in the next 15 minutes. The more they see purpose to the activity, the more likely they will participate and learn what you want them to learn. For a few of the activities in this book, however, you would ruin their

impact by sharing the objective up front. In those cases, tell them there is an objective that will become clear to them in a few minutes. Make sure that objective is called out during the Debrief (the discussion that is held immediately after the activity).

Explain the activity's rules or steps. Don't be afraid to read from this book, use notes, or even have them posted on the wall. Speak slowly, and pause after each one. Remember, they haven't had time to read and reread the activity like you have. It's usually easier to explain the activity all at once before responding to any questions from

the team.

Have the team move through the activity's steps as you explain them. For example, if the first step of an activity is to divide the group into smaller teams, have them actually do that before you tell them the next step.

Most activities will not be ruined if smaller groups are not exactly the same size. If the

A NOTE ON TEAM SIZE:

correct size
is critical, the
odd
participant or
two could be
assigned the
role of
"Observer."

The
Observer
role is to
quietly watch
the others
participate.
During the
Debrief, the
Observer

shares his or
her unique
observations.

When an
activity
requires the
participants
to pair up,
use your
own
participation
to even
things out.
Participate
if the
number is

A NOTE ON PAIRING UP:

odd;
observe if it
is even.

**Distribute the materials after
you've fully explained the activity.**

Otherwise, you risk people getting distracted by them and missing key points. Distribute the materials before the explanation only if you have found that the materials help people understand things better.

Step 4. During: Check for understanding before beginning.

People often hesitate to ask for help when they are confused. You can clarify misunderstandings with patience and some simple review questions. You can keep competition from getting out of hand by laying down a few ground rules, but they must be agreed upon up front.

Make sure your team understands the activity. Asking "*Do you understand?*" is the least effective way to check this (who

wants to answer "No" in front of the group?). "*Do you have any questions?*" is a little better. "*What questions do you have?*" is even better.

However, the best way to check their understanding is to ask questions that force the team to review the steps or rules of the activity. For example, "*How many minutes do you have to complete this?*" or "*What happens if one of your balloons pops?*"

When the activity will result in one or more winners, make sure

everyone is clear on what criteria will be used to determine who wins. Then, ask a review question such as *"How exactly does someone win?"* If ties need to be broken, explain how that will be done.

Declare up front that you are the final judge on all disagreements about who wins. You don't want the team to argue about who won and lose sight of the real purpose of the activity.

When you are confident everyone understands the activity and is

**ready to go, ask one last time,
*"What remaining questions do
you have before we start?"***

Step 5. During: Run the activity.

Letting the team go through the activity, and possibly even fail, may be difficult for you to let happen. Remember, the activity is a low-risk alternative to letting the participants learn from failures on the job! People learn and retain better when they experience lessons, rather than when they just hear them. Sit back, observe, and let your team experience.

Once they begin the activity, see that they are following the steps

or rules. You want them to at least get started down the path to success. Hold off on correction for just a moment, though. They may check themselves. If not, gently bring them back to task.

Encourage and support them all. Especially thank anyone who goes first in an activity. Being first is a scary situation for many. It takes courage to go first and risk embarrassment or failure.

Make yourself available to clarify steps or redirect the team. If appropriate, walk around quietly and watch for opportunities to help the

team succeed. Be careful not to do their task for them, though.

Throughout the activity, watch for things you will want to bring up later during the Debrief. It is OK to jot down a note or two to remember.

If the activity is timed, watch the clock, and give a "time check" occasionally. For example, *"Time check: you have 2 minutes left."*

Don't stop the activity unless it really runs amuck. Otherwise, let it run its course. There will be plenty of opportunity to comment on lessons learned during the Debrief.

Step 6. During: Debrief the activity.

The Debrief is the most critical part of the team-building activity. It is the time when effective questions will guide the participants to link what they experienced in the activity with their behavior on the job. If this step is skipped or glossed over, most of the impact of the activity will be lost in a matter of days. If you do the Debrief well, the lessons learned during the activity will stay with the team indefinitely.

Ask the questions outlined in this

book immediately. For most questions, there is no right or wrong answer. Allow all answers to be OK. Try not to evaluate or critique any answer; just nod and accept each one as you listen to it. The questions for each activity should lead the team to the conclusions you want them to reach without you having to spell it out for them.

It is fine to read the questions from this book or to use notes.

Stop talking, silently read the question, look back at the team, and then ask the question. The few seconds of silence while you read are less noticeable and less

offensive to the group than if you read the question aloud while looking at it. Also, making eye contact while you ask the question is more likely to result in responses than if you do it the other way.

Another way to ask the questions is to write them on index cards beforehand. Pass the index cards out, and ask the participants to take turns reading the questions and soliciting responses.

Try not to call on anyone by name unless you have to. Be comfortable with the silence. Once you have asked a question,

stop talking and slowly count to 10 in your head. The silence may feel like an eternity to you, but it feels just as long to the group. Eventually someone will answer! Remember, they have never heard the question before, so it may take a few seconds to formulate a response.

Watch for heads nodding, smiles, and other indications that they agree with what is being said by others. Not everyone has to respond to every question for the entire group to learn. If you see reactions that suggest disagreement, ask, *"Does anyone*

disagree?" or "What about an opposing view?" Call on the one disagreeing only as a last resort.

Repeat or quickly summarize each response offered.

If anyone gives an off-the-wall response or one that is just plain wrong, ask the group how they feel about it rather than correcting someone. This technique will keep it "safe" for all participants to continue answering questions without fear of a reprimand from you.

Even if the activity did not go

quite as well as planned, most participants probably learned something. No matter what happened, you can always ask if the group has ever seen anything like this happen back on the job. Ask what can be learned from this experience. The answers may include what can be improved for future team-building activities!

Step 7. After: Reinforce the learning back on the job.

With your help, the activity can continue teaching the participants long after it is over. Reminding participants of the activity and keeping the lessons learned alive will extend its impact. Keep your team focused on behaviors that support the kind of team you are trying to build.

Display anything the team created for the activity back in the workplace. Each time they see that

sculpture, flipchart, or cardboard structure, they will be reminded of what they did, how it made them feel, and what it taught them.

If any new terms or special words came up during the activity, use them frequently. Like the visual items mentioned above, these words will prompt a recall of what happened and what they learned.

Refer to the activity and the lessons learned often when you are coaching, giving feedback, or conducting staff meetings. Look for examples of people exhibiting good team behavior related to the

activity, and call it out for them and others to see.

If the activity was a huge success, you may want to repeat it soon.

Plan follow-up activities that will reinforce, emphasize, and build upon what was learned this time.

Watch for examples of how the participants used what was learned in the activity and got better results. If you can quantify how their actions are benefiting the organization, call it out for them and others as evidence of success.

Ask participants in your next staff meeting to share what impact the activity has had on them. If you are in remote locations, use e-mail, electronic bulletin boards, and so forth to keep the learning alive.

Chapter 2: What Could Go Wrong in a Team-Building Activity

The team-building activities in this book are easy to conduct in most situations. They have been used successfully with hundreds of other groups just like yours. Follow the instructions carefully, and you will be successful, too!

If you have never run such activities before, it is natural to be concerned about what could go wrong. Below are the most common fears and problems managers face in running

an activity. Channel the energy your concerns generate into positive actions to avoid problems and/or effectively deal with them if they do happen!

What if ... One or more people don't want to participate?

- Rolling eyes.
- Lack of eye contact with you, or other negative body language.

**What
you'll see**
...

- Negative comments about the activity or team-building in general.
- Direct comments that they do not want to participate.
- Direct refusal to participate.
- Participants dragging their

feet on getting started.

- Suggestions for an alternate activity (*"Why don't we just ..."*).
- Past team-building exercises that were unpleasant or unproductive.
- Not understanding

The most

**likely
causes ...**

the purpose or
value of the
activity.

- Shyness or fear of being embarrassed.
- The activity doesn't sound fun or worthwhile.
- Be clear about the purpose of the activity when you introduce it to

the group.

- Be sure the purpose of the activity is one that is needed or valued by the group.
- Reassure them that everyone will do it (and no one will be singled out and maybe embarrassed).
- If it's an activity

**How to
prevent
this from
happening**

...

that allows this,
have the less
shy people go
first.

- If you expect resistance from a particular individual, privately approach him or her beforehand to gain his or her commitment to participate.
- Unless it's

critical, don't make a big deal of it; perhaps after witnessing one or two team-building activities, they will become more willing to participate next time.

- Remind them that in order for it to be team-building, everyone must participate;

otherwise, the rest of the group won't benefit from the exercise.

What to do if it happens anyway ...

- Let the group know someone doesn't want to participate, and allow them to handle it.
(Beware, they may apply more pressure than you would, or they may not allow that

person to participate at all.)

- Find a way for the person to still be involved—perhaps as Scorekeeper, or Timekeeper, or Observer (with the expectation that he or she will offer observations after the activity).

What if ... They don't understand the directions I am giving?

- Confused looks.
- Participants asking each other what to do.

What you'll see

...

- Participants not doing what is expected.
- Nothing happens when the activity

begins.

- Lots of questions for clarification.
- Directions were given out of order.
- Directions were poorly explained.
- Side bar conversations distracted attention.

The most likely causes ...

- Directions were given too fast.
- Directions were too lengthy and not posted.
- Read and reread the directions to make sure *you* understand them well.
- Practice explaining the activity to others until they

**How to
prevent
this from
even
happening**

...

readily
understand.
Use their
questions to
help you adjust
the way you
explain it next
time.

- Pause after each direction to let it sink in.
- Speak slowly as you explain the activity.
- Repeat what

seems like the obvious when you give directions (e.g., *"First I want you to pair up. That means we need everyone in groups of two—find one partner to be with right now."*).

- Start over. Repeat all the directions, so

the difficult
ones are put
into context.
This time, slow
down even
more.

- Ask someone
who did
understand to
help you
explain.
- Do not get
frustrated
(either with
yourself or the
team). Stay

**What to
do if it
happens
anyway ...**

calm and
focused. Be
patient with
yourself and
with them until
you are
successful.

- Read the
directions from
the book. If you
got it from the
book, they will
also.
- If applicable,
demonstrate
the activity.

What if ... Materials break, don't work, or we don't have enough?

**What
you'll see
...**

- Not enough materials to go around.
- Materials breaking or not functioning as planned.
- Not planning ahead.
- Underestimating the number of

The most

**likely
causes ...**

materials
needed.

- Wrong materials being used.
- Bring more than enough materials for all possible participants; err on the side of too many rather than too few.
- Practice or test the activity with

**How to
prevent
this from
even**

happening

...

exactly the materials you'll be working with (using the exact timeframe) to make sure they will work the way you expect.

- Use spare materials (if you have extras).
- Improvise with other materials, if possible.

**What to
do if it**

**happens
anyway ...**

- Adjust the rules of the activity, if possible.
- Reschedule the activity for another time.

What if ... Someone gets overly competitive?

- Taking the activity too seriously.
- Bending the rules, or even cheating.

What you'll see

...

- Extreme efforts to win or do better than others.
- Overly discussing the activity afterwards, with a focus on strategies and missed opportunities rather than on learning points.
- A naturally

competitive environment in the work-place (e.g., a sales force).

The most likely causes ...

- Naturally competitive people.
- Conflict in the group.
- Too much focus on the activity rather than on learning.

- Focus the group's attention on the activity's purpose and learning goals when introducing it.
- For a naturally competitive group, select activities that encourage teamwork or that have less of an element of competition

**How to
prevent
this from
even**

happening

built into them.

...

- Offer a very minimal prize for the winner during the introduction that will not be a lingering reminder (for example, an exactly 3-second round of applause, rather than a candy bar).

- Focus the Debrief on what happened, why it happened, group dynamics, and so forth, rather than on who won or did better than whom (you may even have to declare, "*Let's take the focus off the activity itself and discuss what*

**What to
do if it
happens
anyway ...**

*we learned
from the
activity.").*

- Discuss the competitiveness that came out, why it came out, and how helpful or destructive it was. Link those things back to the workplace.
- If you must, stop the activity in the middle to

remind the group of the activity's purpose and learning goals.

What if ... Participants don't join the Debrief discussion?

- Lack of eye contact with you, especially right after you ask a question.

What you'll see ...

- Minimal or one-word responses to your

questions.

- Shoulders shrugging.
- Silence.
- They didn't understand your question.
- You haven't given them enough time to formulate an answer.
- They fear embarrassment

The most likely

causes ...

of a "wrong" answer in front of you or their peers.

- They are angry about something (may be unrelated to the activity).
- Ask questions slowly.
- Don't be afraid to read the questions from

the book.

**How to
prevent
this from
even
happening
...**

- Pause (silently count to 10) after each question. This pause may feel like an eternity to you, but it will give participants the time they need to consider an appropriate response.
- Unless they are too far off,

accept and appreciate all responses. This is an opportunity to appreciate the diverse thinking styles of your team!

- Reword or restate questions only if the group tells you that they didn't understand the question;

otherwise, let them think.

- As a last resort, call on participants by name to respond.
- Explain that the activity is only as valuable as our ability to transfer what we learned from it back to the workplace. We can start

**What to
do if it
happens
anyway ...**

doing that by
discussing
these
questions.

- After asking a question, offer your own observation. Then ask what others saw that was similar to or different from what you just shared.
- When you get responses,

emphatically
thank the first
few participants
for contributing.

What if ... Someone dominates
the Debrief?

- One person answering most of the questions.
- One person talking excessively.
- Most

**What
you'll see
...**

participants
remaining silent.

- The person wanted to help you (and the team) by offering the answers.
- The person wanted to show that he or she has the correct answers.
- Other participants

didn't volunteer
answers.

**The most
likely
causes ...**

- Other participants are afraid to differ with the dominant person.
- The person was impatient waiting for others to contribute.
- The person doesn't feel like

he or she is
being heard or
taken seriously.

- The person
may be
dominating the
group in day-to-
day work, and
this is just an
extension of
those group
norms.
- After anyone
answers a
question, ask,
"What do the

rest of you
think?" or
"What else?" as
you make eye
contact with
other
participants.
This will give
the signal that
you are looking
for more
discussion than
just one answer
per question.

- Repeat or
quickly
summarize

each comment,
and then say,
*"Great, who
else has an
observation?"*

**How to
prevent
this from
even
happening
...**

- Be comfortable yourself, waiting for others to respond (a few seconds of silence may encourage others to speak).
- If you expect

one person to dominate the discussion, consider talking to that person before the activity and asking him or her to hold back, or encourage others to contribute.

- If the person tends to dominate day to day, begin to

address that
behavior
outside the
bounds of this
activity.

- When asking questions, avoid making eye contact with the dominating individual.
- Begin a few questions with, *"OK, for the rest of you, my next question is*

..."

**What to
do if it
happens
anyway ...**

- Call on a few participants for their thoughts.
- In an extreme case, ask the person to hold off speaking until others have had a chance to respond.
- Ask, "*Who has a different perspective he*

*or she would
like to share
with us?"*

What if ... The Debrief gets out of hand?

**What
you'll see
...**

- A gripe session.
- Arguing or fighting.
- Discussion moving off the topic.
- Side bar discussions.

The most likely causes ...

- Poor questions asked during the Debrief.
- Unresolved team issues.
- Lost control.
- Unless you are a skilled facilitator, don't veer too far from the questions in this book.
- Do not host

activities in hopes of resolving deep issues in the team.

How to prevent this from even happening ...

- Ask one or more team members beforehand what kind of reaction they believe the activity will spark in the team.
- Avoid questions

that will put
anyone on the
spot.

- Avoid questions
that pit
someone
against
someone else.
- Step in and
stop the
discussion(s)
before more
damage is
done; ask,
*"How does this
discussion*

*apply to what
we learned
from the
activity?"*

- Don't try to assign blame or find the cause.
- Refocus the Debrief with specific, targeted questions (use the questions in this book).
- In a severe

**What to
do if it
happens
anyway ...**

case, terminate the activity and Debrief altogether. This may be an ideal time to try to identify the issues at play and figure out what activities to use next.

What if ... They don't get what I wanted them to get out of the activity?

- Incorrect answers during

the Debrief.

**What
you'll see**
...

- No connection of the activity to the workplace.
- Key participant behaviors or actions during the activity go unnoticed.
- The purpose of the activity was not explained well up front.
- The activity was

The most likely causes ...

not the best one to bring out the learning you wanted.

- Debrief questions were not handled well.
- Be sure to explain the purpose of the activity to the team. Get them to buy into the need to engage

and learn.

- Be sure you have a clear learning objective and that the activity you choose will achieve that for your team.
- Let the participants answer the Debrief questions rather than spoon-feed the correct

**How to
prevent
this from
even
happening**

...

responses to them.

- When you get minimal responses to Debrief questions, ask for clarification or elaboration.
- Avoid helping the participants get through the activity. The more you help, the less they experience, and

thus the less
they learn and
grow

- Disclose to the group what lesson you had hoped to teach, and discuss where that lesson was found in the activity.
- Let it go; accept what they did learn,

**What to
do if it
happens
anyway ...**

and build upon that.

- If time permits, redo the activity with a renewed focus on the desired objective.

A FINAL NOTE:

Remember, your participants want their activity to be successful just as much as you do!

Part II: The Activities

Chapter List

Chapter 3: Communication:
Listening and Influencing

Chapter 4: Connecting: Getting to
Know Each Other

Chapter 5: Cooperation: Working
Together as a Team

Chapter 6: Coping: Dealing with
Change

Chapter 7: Creativity: Solving
Problems Together

Chapter 8: Teamwork:

Appreciating and Supporting Each Other

Chapter 3:

Communication:

Listening and Influencing

\$2 Negotiation

This is ... An activity in which participants negotiate with each other for \$2.

The purpose is ... Participants find creative solutions to simple problems; they see that a majority vote is not always the most effective way to decide.

- Individuals are focusing too much on their own needs.

Use this when ...

- Individuals need to practice creativity (in problem solving).
- The group relies heavily on "majority rules" for making decisions.

Materials you'll need ...

- Two one-dollar coins for each team of three participants.

1. Divide the

group into
teams of
three.

2. Give each team two one-dollar coins.
3. They have 5 minutes to decide between the three of them who will keep the coins.
4. If all else fails, a simple

**Here's
how ...**

majority vote
can decide.

5. After 5
minutes, any
team still
undecided will
lose the coins
back to you.

"We agreed Olivia would
get both dollars. We
trust she will donate
them to her son's soccer
team fund."

"We agreed Roger
would get one, and
Therese would get the

For

example other. They will let me
... be first to close my
register the rest of the
week."

"We agreed that Kenji
would get both dollars.
He gave each of us one-
minute shoulder
massages!"

- What strategies
did you use
during the
negotiation?
Which were
most helpful?

- Did everyone rely on majority rules? Why or why not?
- How did the time limit influence how you negotiated? (*I felt rushed; It put more pressure on us; It made me cave in quicker; I was more aggressive; etc.*)

Ask these questions
...

- How did you find out what the others valued? (*I just asked them what they wanted; I listened to what they were offering me and assumed they valued that; etc.*)
- What implications does this have for us back on

the job?

- Emphasize that this is not just an exercise.
Whoever ends up with the coins gets to keep them.
- Two participants can end up with one coin each, or one participant can get both coins.
- Give a 2-minute

warning before
the play is to
end.

- Most teams will not come up with the obviously easy solution: two participants collude and vote to award one coin to each of themselves. Explore why this did or did not happen during the Debrief and

**Tips for
success**

...

compare it to
how things
happen on the
job.

- If one or two participants are not in a threesome, they can be Observers. The Observer role is to quietly watch the others participate. During the Debrief, the Observer shares

his or her unique observations.
OR, have them create foursomes. The dynamics change considerably when there is an even number of participants using majority rules.

- Give each team only one coin to

negotiate.

Try these variations

...

- Use something other than money that all participants would value.
- Divide the group into pairs. Give each pair one coin to negotiate between them.

Card Triangles

- This is ...** A negotiation activity in which teams trade pieces of playing cards in hopes of finding complete cards.
- The purpose is ...** Participants learn to see others' perspectives before they can influence and persuade.
- Individuals are focusing too much on their own needs.

Use this when ...

- Individuals need to hone their sales skills.
- Individuals need to develop their negotiation skills.
- A deck of playing cards.
- Cut each card in half diagonally, then in half diagonally again, so each card is now in four

Materials you'll need ...

triangle
quarters.

- Mix all the pieces well, and place an equal number of pieces in the same number of envelopes as you will have teams.
 - Small prizes for the winners (optional).
1. Divide the group into

teams of three
or four.

2. Give each team an envelope containing playing card triangles.
3. The teams have 3 minutes to examine and sort their pieces and plan their strategy for bartering.

Here's how ...

4. Open the bartering. Everyone participates by bartering for the pieces their team needs. (They may barter individually or as a team.)
5. Allow 8 minutes for bartering.
6. Count the teams'

completed
cards, and
announce the
winning team.

- How willing were others to trade with you?
- What negotiation tactics were most successful for you? (*Seeing what they wanted and offering that; Being*

*aggressive;
Being a nice
guy, etc.)*

- How did your strategy change during play?
Why?
- What other skills did you have to draw on to be successful?
(Listening, empathy, giving a personal touch, creative problem

Ask these questions
...

solving, etc.)

- In what work situations do we find ourselves negotiating for time, information, or resources?
- What implication does this have for us back on the job?
- You must have at least three teams for this

activity to work well. If necessary, have the teams consist of two participants.

Tips for success

...

- They can barter individually or as teams.
- Give a 2-minute warning before play is to end.
- Observe whether two or more teams

combine might.
Comment during
the Debrief.

- For smaller groups, give each participant an envelope, and have them all barter individually rather than in teams.
- After 4 minutes of play, give the teams 2 minutes to form a

Try these

variations

...

coalition. Any two teams that want to merge may do so before resuming play. Make sure there was an even number of teams to begin with. What influenced your team's decision to merge? And with whom?

Listen Up

This is ... A speaking activity in which participants listen as others share their views on a controversial topic.

The purpose is ... Participants practice listening skills, even when they are anxious to agree emphatically or strongly challenge.

- Individuals are not listening well.

**Use this
when ...**

- Individuals feel like others are not listening with open minds.
- Individuals want to get to know each other better.
- An identical set of 10 to 15 index cards for each team. On each card in the set, you will have written a different

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

controversial
topic.

1. Have the participants pair up.
2. Give each pair a set of prepared index cards.
3. One partner draws a card and speaks for 3 minutes nonstop about her views on

the topic.

**Here's
how ...**

4. Her partner may not say anything, just listen.
5. After 3 minutes, her partner has 1 minute to recap what he heard. This is not the time to rebut, debate, or agree—just summarize.

6. Reverse roles,
and repeat
with a new
topic.

Controversial topics can
include gay marriage,
abortion, prayer in
schools, euthanasia,
election finance reform,
capital punishment,
income tax reform,
needle exchange for
drug users, unions,
social security reform,
non-English-speaking
communities in the USA,
the space program,

**For
example
...**

AIDS, nuclear arms, and so forth.

- How did the speakers' tone and body language contribute to the message?
- How did you feel listening without being able to speak your mind?
(Frustrated, anxious, made

*me listen better,
etc.)*

Ask these questions

...

- How did you feel speaking without your listener saying anything?
(Like I was being heard; Frustrated that I did not know where she was on the issue; etc.)
- How was the listener's summary?

- When is it especially important for us to listen this attentively at work?
- What implication does this have for us back on the job?
- Participants can reject up to two topics if they are uncomfortable discussing them.

**Tips for
success
...**

- You can use one large set of index cards for the whole group. Duplicate cards are fine. Have enough cards for each participant (and a few extras). Distribute one card to each team. After one person has talked, distribute another card to the other

participant. Do not give both cards at once. The second participant will be tempted to focus on what he may say when he should be listening to his partner!

- Give a 30-second warning before play is to end.
- Choose the

controversial topics so that they are all related to your industry, field, or organization.

- After the first participant speaks on a topic for 3 minutes, allow the second participant to speak on the same topic for 3 minutes. Discuss how two

Try these variations

...

monologues are different from one discussion.

- Allow the listener to speak, but only to ask questions to understand better the other's position.

Me, Myself, And I

This is ... A story-telling activity that forces participants to communicate about anything except themselves.

The purpose is ... Participants see how often their communication is centered on themselves.

- Individuals need to improve their communication skills to focus less on self and

more on others.

- Individuals need to focus on listening skills.
- Individuals need to practice creativity (around communication techniques).
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

**Use this
when ...**

Materials you'll need ...

- No materials are necessary for this activity.
1. Have the participants pair up.
 2. One partner begins by speaking for 3 minutes nonstop. He must continue talking, no pauses.
 3. He may speak

**Here's
how ...**

about any
topic or
several topics.

4. He may never use the word "I."
5. The listening partner may not speak at all, not even to ask questions or say "uh-huh."
6. After his 3 minutes,

reverse roles,
and repeat.

- Which role was easier for you, the speaker or the listener? Why?
- How did you feel listening without being able to ask questions or contribute your own thoughts?
(Left out, less connected, more focused)

*on the speaker,
etc.)*

- How did you feel speaking without being able to check in with your listener?
(Worried that he was not understanding or did not care, uncomfortable with the attention on me, enjoying the attention and

Ask these questions

...

focus, etc.)

- How difficult or easy was it to keep talking non-stop? Why?
- What creative ways did you find to talk about yourself without using "I?"
- How can we phrase our communications to focus better on the other

person?

- What implications does this have for us back on the job?
- Be prepared to demonstrate a portion of a 2-minute monologue without using "I" if the group demands it. Have the group

**Tips for
success
...**

try to catch you
using an "I."

- Give a 30-second warning before the play ends.
- Add a get-to-know-you element by having them determine who is the first speaker and listener by who is oldest, who lives furthest

from your location, who has the next birthday, the cutest pet, is most physically fit, and so forth.

- Extend the speaking time to 5 minutes to make it more difficult.
- Add competitiveness by allowing the listeners to gain

Try these variations

...

two points for each time the speaker says "I" and one point when they pause more than 5 seconds. Be prepared with small prizes for the winner(s). During the Debrief, ask how the competitiveness impacted the activity.

Origami

This is ...

An activity in which participants follow instructions to fold a sheet of paper while keeping their eyes closed.

The purpose is ...

Participants see how instructions can be interpreted differently, and thus how clear our communications need to be.

- Individuals are not communicating clearly or specifically.
- Individuals make t

**Use this
when ...**

many assumptions
their listeners.

- You don't have pre time and/or material for any-thing more elaborate.

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

- One sheet of paper each participant.
1. Give each participant a sheet of paper
 2. Announce that you will give them instructions on how to fold their paper.

**Here's
how ...**

3. Have them close eyes. They must keep their eyes closed, and they not ask question during your instructions.
4. Give instructions fold and rip their papers several t
5. Have everyone c their eyes, unfold their papers, and compare what th look like.

**For
example
...**

- Fold your paper in
- Now, fold it in half again.
- Then, fold it in half more time.
- Now, rip off the right corner.
- Turn your paper over and rip off the upper corner.
- Did everyone come with the same end result? Why or why

not?

**Ask these
questions
...**

- How would the results have been different if your eyes were left open? (*We could have compared and contrasted what others were doing; etc.*)
- How did you feel as I was giving the instructions? (*Confused? I wanted to ask more questions, frustrated with you, etc.*)
- How could my

instructions have been
improved?

- What implication does
this have for us based
on the job?
- Give the instruction
slowly and deliberately
You are not trying to
lose them or trick them
Repeat as necessary
- Do not correct anyone
as he or she is following
There is no one right
answer. The
instructions are

**Tips for
success**

...

ambiguous on purp

- Watch to see if an
opens his or her e
When is it appropri
to break the rules'
- Invite participants
give the directions
the group. See if t
can accomplish m
consistent results
your Debrief.
- Allow the participa
to keep their eyes
open, but make th
folding more comp

**Try these
variations
...**

Use origami paper
give the instruction
folding it into an oi
shape.

Shared Values

This is ... A sharing activity in which participants come to agreement on the most important shared values to the group.

The purpose is ... Participants come to agreement on the most important values they share.

- A significant project or work effort is beginning.

Use this when ...

- Individuals feel like others are not listening with open minds.
- Individuals need to bond together.
- Paper and a pen for each participant.

Materials you'll need ...

- One piece of flipchart paper for each team.
- Colored

markers.

1. Have each participant take 2 minutes to write down what he or she feels are the three most important values to your organization.
2. Divide the group into teams of four to six participants.

**Here's
how ...**

3. Have each participant share her three values within her team.
4. From all the values shared, the team must agree on the top three most important values for your organization.
5. Give each team a piece

of flipchart
paper and
some colored
markers.

6. Each team
creates a
poster with
words,
symbols,
and/or pictures
that reflects
those three
values.
7. After 10
minutes, have
each team

present their poster to the group.

For example

...

Values include things such as commitment to customers, integrity, teamwork, leadership, quality focus, innovation, efficiency, respect, creativity, learning, and so forth.

- What values seem to be common across teams?

- How did you handle disagreements in the teams?
- If someone new to the organization saw these lists of values, how do you think they would expect people to behave?
- Do we behave like that?

Ask these questions

...

- What can cause us to lose sight of our values?
(Pressing deadlines, others acting differently, changes at work, etc.) What can we do when that happens?
- How would living these values help us meet our goals?
- What implication

does this have
for us back on
the job?

- Encourage the teams to be creative in their representation of the values.
- If your organization already has stated values, have the teams still try to identify the three most important

for this part of the organization.

Tips for success

...

- If a team does not finish, ask what prevented them from doing so. Others will learn from their difficulties. Then ask how those barriers could have been avoided or dealt with effectively.
- In the coming days,

periodically ask which values are being demonstrated on the job.

- If your organization (or just your department) does not have a mission statement, have the teams make a poster to present what your mission statement

**Try these
variations
...**

should be.
Remember, a
mission
statement
explains why the
organization
exists, not its
goals.

- If your organization (or just your department) does not have a vision statement, have the teams make a poster to present what

your vision
should be.

Remember, the
vision statement
tells where you
hope to be in the
future.

Washing Machines

This is ... A creative selling activity in which participants think of different ways to market a load of 10,000 used washing machines.

The purpose is ... Participants practice thinking of creative solutions and looking at things from others' perspectives.

- Individuals are focusing too much on their own needs.

**Use this
when ...**

- Creative thinking is not happening very much.
- Individuals need to hone their sales skills.
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

**Materials
you'll**

- No materials are necessary for this activity

need ...

unless you give
a small prize for
the winning
team.

1. Divide the
group into
teams of three
to six
participants.
2. Announce that
each team has
come upon a
free load of
10,000 used
old washing
machines.

**Here's
how ...**

3. They are to think of a way to market these machines and prepare a sales pitch (a 30-second commercial) for the rest of the group.
4. Allow them 8 minutes to work in teams.
5. Each team presents its

commercial to the rest of the group.

6. Have the group vote on which marketing design would most likely succeed in bringing in sales.

Some uses for the old machines may be as retro decorative planters; filled with ice

**For
example
...**

and beer for parties; as a container for mixing dye for fabric; as huge, whimsical jack-in-the-boxes; as basketball hoops with a twist; as fishbowls for dark-loving fish; as a toy box; and so forth.

- How did your team arrive at the marketing design you chose?
- How creative do you think you

were? Why?

- What assumptions did you operate under? *(That it had to do with laundry, that we must sell to consumers and not other businesses, that we could paint or otherwise alter the machines from their original*

Ask these questions

...

state, etc.) How did those assumptions limit or expand your creativity?

- How did you identify features and benefits of your product? (Point out that this is where you have to focus on others' needs.)
- What implication does this have for us back on

the job?

- Let each team determine if the washing machines are still operable or not.
- For a highly competitive group, rule that participants may not vote for their own design.
- Have one or two offbeat ideas

**Tips for
success**

...

yourself before the activity begins. If a team is really stuck, offer those ideas to help get their creative juices flowing.

- Emphasize that the commercial can be only 30 seconds long, and that you'll time it.
- Rather than a

30-second commercial, each team creates a full-page magazine ad for their product on a piece of flipchart paper. Explain to the group which magazine this would appear in and why.

- Rather than a 30-second commercial, each team

Try these variations
...

creates a website for their product on a piece of flipchart paper. Explain to the group how the website works, and so forth.

- Rather than old used washing machines, try other unlikely items, such as old nonfunctioning computer

monitors; beat
up, old orange
barrels from
highway
construction
sites; the 1983
yellow pages for
Key West, FL;
and so forth.

Chapter 4: Connecting: Getting to Know Each Other

A Day in the Life...

This is ...

An activity in which participants share with each other what their typical day looks like.

The purpose is ...

Participants learn new and interesting things about each other and connect with each other on a personal level.

- Individuals do not know each other very well.
- Individuals do

**Use this
when ...**

not appreciate
the each other's
contributions.

- You don't have
prep time and/or
materials for
anything more
elaborate.

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

- No materials are
necessary for
this activity.
1. Have the
participants
pair up.
 2. One partner

recalls in detail
what his
typical
workday is
like.

**Here's
how ...**

3. When listening,
his partner can
say only, "Then
what?" or
"Ooh, tell me
more about
that!"
4. After 5
minutes,
reverse roles
and repeat for

5 more
minutes.

- How did you feel sharing these experiences with each other? (*I felt a sense of closeness; I realized we have more in common; Empathy; etc*)

**Ask these
questions**

...

- What did you learn about your partner and his

workload?

- What implication does this have for us back on the job?
- Five minutes may seem long to some. They will be tempted to finish in a minute or two. That is not enough time to share the detail the listener needs to get a

good sense of what his partner's day is really like.

Remember, the objective is not to give an overview and be finished; the objective is to understand each other's workload better.

Tips for success

...

- If they struggle with describing a typical day (because it is

never "typical"),
have them
describe
yesterday.

- If you will not be participating, begin the activity by demonstrating how to do it. Share with the group your typical day!
- Give a 1-minute time check before the 5

minutes are up.

- To get to know each other on a personal basis, have the participants focus on a weekend or other nonwork day.
- After the participants share their days, have them pair up with

Try these

variations

...

someone else
and repeat the
activity.

- Have the participants share their days in teams of three to six. This takes longer, but allows them to hear and learn from more than just one or two other participants.

Gossip Time

This is ...

An activity in which participants share fun or complimentary gossip about each other and then try to guess who said what.

The purpose is ...

Participants learn new and interesting things about each other. This may prompt further appreciation for each other and stronger personal ties.

- Individuals know

each other quite well.

**Use this
when ...**

- There is a comfortable trust among the group.
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

- Paper and pencils or pens for each participant.

1. One person volunteers (or is volunteered!) to be the first Target.
2. Everyone else writes one thing about the Target on a slip of paper. It can be complimentary or a bit surprising.

3. Collect the statements, and randomly select one to read aloud.
4. The Target gets one chance to guess who wrote it.
5. If the Target guesses incorrectly, read the next statement. Each time a

**Here's
how ...**

statement is
read, the
Target has one
chance to
guess its
author.

6. Play continues
until the Target
can correctly
identify the
source of a
particular
statement.
7. When the
Target
correctly

identifies the author, that author becomes the next Target, and another round begins from step 2.

8. Play as many rounds as time allows or until energy for the activity wanes.

"Someone says you are still in love with Ringo Starr!"

For

example "Someone called you a
... good listener."
"Someone says you sing
great karaoke."

**Ask these
questions**
...

- How much did you learn about each other?
- How embarrassed (or proud) were you when you were the Target?
- What made it difficult (or easy) for you to guess

who authored
the comments?

- Keep the mood light and fun. Protect the group from mean or inappropriate remarks.
- Don't let the Target read the papers. He or she may be able to identify the source by the handwriting.

Tips for success

...

- You may ask the Target to leave the room while the others write.
- If time is limited, you don't have to wait for every person to write something. Ask the Target to leave the room during writing, so he or she cannot see who doesn't turn in a paper.

- Limit the comments to only work-related or even project-related items.
- If you limit the comments to only complimentary items, this becomes a Recognition activity.

Try these

- You can focus

variations

...

this activity on a particular learning goal. Limit the comments to the Target's communication style, interpersonal relationships, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities or techniques or other work-related goals.

Human Billboards

This is ... A self-disclosure activity in which participants create a poster about themselves.

The purpose is ... Participants learn more about each other and connect on a personal level.

- Individuals do not know each other very well.

Use this when ...

- One or more of the individuals are new to the team.

Materials you'll need ...

- A new team is forming.
 - One flipchart paper for each participant.
 - Colored markers.
 - Scissors.
1. Give each participant a piece of flipchart paper and some colored markers.
 2. They have 6 minutes to use words, pictures,

symbols to describe
themselves on the
"billboard."

**Here's
how ...**

3. Cut a slit or an "X" near the top of the paper so the participant can fit his or her head through it.
4. Participants put their billboard or it drapes in front of them.
5. Encourage them to mingle for 6

minutes.

6. While mingling, t
can only ask
questions about
another's billboa
or respond to
questions asked
them.

- Why is it important
for us to know each
other outside of a
purely work-related
context?

- How difficult (or
easy) was it to share

**Ask these
questions**

...

information about
yourself with other

- How can we learn more about each other back on the job?
- Reassure those who are reluctant and those who do not know what to write that they only need share what they are comfortable disclosing now.
- Have them print th

Tips for success

...

names on their billboards and post them around the break room, conference room, lunchroom so they can refer to them and continue to reach out to others.

- You may use this activity to just get acquainted or get meeting started without asking the Debrief questions afterwards.

- You can use this activity more than once with the same group. Use one of the Variations below.
- Direct what will go on the billboard. It can be centered on one theme, for example, only career related; only company/organization related; only non-work-related; only favorites—color, food, book, movie

US President, and forth; only wishes and dreams, and s forth.

Try these variations

...

- Instead of a billboard, have participants create screen saver, T-shirt bumper sticker, personal flag, license plate, tattoo, and s forth.
- You may use regular 8 1/2 × 11 paper instead of flipchart paper and have

participants tape
them to their ches

- You may use tape and string to make neck holder for the billboard, rather than cutting it.

My N.A.M.E.

This is ... An activity in which participants introduce themselves by presenting their first names as acronyms.

The purpose is ... Everyone knows everyone else's name and some interesting things about each other. That information may prompt some small talk later.

- One or more of the individuals'

names are not known.

Use this when ...

- Individuals do not know each other very well.
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

Materials you'll need ...

- No materials are necessary for this activity.
1. Give the group 5 minutes to

**Here's
how ...**

think of
interesting
facts about
themselves
that
correspond to
the letters of
their first
name.

2. Have each
participant
share his or
her acronym.

"Hi, I'm Logan. L is for
Led Zeppelin, one of my
favorite rock groups. O

**For
example**

...

is for Ohio, which is where I live. G is for German, the only foreign language I know. A is for Aunt Wendee, my favorite relative. And N is for Nice, because I am a nice guy!"

- Why is it important for us to know each other beyond a purely work-related context?

Ask these

- How difficult (or easy) was it to

questions

...

share
information
about yourself
with others?

- How can we learn more about each other back on the job?
- If participants get stuck, tell them they do not have to follow the rules strictly. For example, "L" can be for

Loving
chocolate,
Loving chess,
Loving snow,
and so forth.

Tips for success ...

- Be prepared to share your own acronym as an example for the group.
- You may use this activity to just get acquainted or get a meeting started without

asking the
Debrief
questions
afterwards.

- Instead of
acronyms about
themselves,
have the
participants
make acronyms
from their first
names that
correspond to
the kind of work
they do
(customer

**Try these
variations**

...

service,
research, etc.)
or a current
project they are
working on or a
problem they
collectively face
(you may be
surprised at a
few creative
ideas for
resolution!).

A Penny for Your Thoughts

This is ...

A light introduction activity that reveals a quick, personal fact about each participant.

The purpose is ...

Everyone knows everyone else's name and one interesting fact about each other. That information may prompt some small talk later.

- One or more of the individual's

names are not known.

**Use this
when ...**

- Individuals do not know each other very well.
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

- One penny for each participant.
The best pennies are shiny, easy to

read, and less than 20 years old.

1. Give a penny to each participant. (As you're doing this, jokingly ask if they realized that they were going to receive a "cash bonus" for attending today!).

Here's how ...

2. Ask them first to introduce themselves with their name and any other information you want shared with the group.
3. Then ask them to share something significant or interesting about themselves from the year on their penny.

4. You go first to set the example.

**For
example
...**

"Hi, I'm Ruth. I've been at this company 14 years and in this department for 3 years. My penny says 1999, and that's the year I let my husband talk me into going skydiving with him!"

- Why is it important for us to know more about each

other?

Ask these questions

...

- How difficult (or easy) was it to share information about yourself with others?
- How can we learn more about each other back on the job?
- Give them a moment to think of something to

say before
beginning.

- When you want them to share more than two pieces of information besides their name, list what you want on a chart or board.
- If someone says she can't remember anything significant from

Tips for success

...

that year,
encourage her
to describe what
was going on in
her life at that
time (where she
was living, what
job she had,
hobbies she was
pursuing, etc.)
OR, use one of
the variations
below.

- This activity can be used with the same group more than once

(since participants are unlikely to get the same year a second time).

- If you don't have pennies, participants can just pull coins out of their own pockets or purses.
- You may use this activity to just get acquainted or

get a meeting
started without
asking the
Debrief
questions
afterwards.

- Have
participants
explain what
would be
different if they
could relive that
year OR how
their lives would
be different if
that year never
happened.

- Have participants tell what their favorite song, movie, TV show, or other entertainment was from that year.

Try these variations

...

- Don't use pennies; just have the participants tell what the best year of their life was and why.

- If you have time, let the group ask questions after each participant shares her information (*Had your husband been skydiving before? Where did you dive? Have you done it since? Would you even want to? And so on*).

Rather Than

This is ... A light introductory activity that reveals personal preferences about each participant.

The purpose is ... Everyone knows one personal preference about each other. That information may then prompt some small talk later.

- One or more of the individuals are new to the team.
- Individuals do not

**Use this
when ...**

know each other
very well.

- You don't have pre time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

- No materials are necessary for this activity.
1. Sit in a circle so everyone can see each other if possible.
 2. Start by declarin

something that
you like to do.

3. The participant
next to you
restates what you
said and then
says something
that he would
rather do than
that.

4. The next
participant
restates what you
just said and then
says something
that *she* would

**Here's
how ...**

rather do than
that.

5. Continue around
the room.

"I like to collect porcelain
dolls."

"Rather than collect
porcelain dolls, I like to eat
ice cream."

"Rather than eat ice cream,
I like to sunbathe on the
beach."

**For
example**

...

"Rather than sunbathe on
the beach, I like to surf the
Net."

"Rather than surf the Net,
like to coach my daughter's
soccer team."

**Ask these
questions
...**

- Why is it important for us to know each other beyond a purely work-related context?
- How difficult (or easy) was it to share information about yourself with others?
- How can we learn more about each

other back on the
job?

- Play can go around the room indefinitely.
- Allow the group to react briefly to comments but not to dwell on anyone's statement (and certainly not criticize)—however bizarre or unpopular!

**Tips for
success**
...

- You may use this activity to just get acquainted or get meeting started without asking the Debrief questions afterwards.
- Specify a category (such as related only to your team and its work, related only to you company/ organization, only non-work-related, only related to hobbies, etc.).

**Try these
variations
...**

- Make this an ice breaker/introductory activity by merely asking the participants to preface their Rath Than comment with their name. For example, "My name is Derek, and rather than eat ice cream..."
- Play Worse Than. Declare something you don't like. The next participant declares that worse

than that, would be
something that
would be worse for
him. For example,
"Worse than going
to the dentist would
be getting lost in a
new city."

Ready, Set, Reorganize!

This is ...

An activity in which participants organize themselves based on various pieces of information about themselves.

The purpose is ...

Participants learn new and interesting facts about each other. That information may then prompt some small talk later.

- One or more of the individuals

are new to the team.

Use this when ...

- Individuals do not know each other very well.
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

Materials you'll need ...

- No materials are necessary for this activity.
1. Divide the group in half.

Stand in lines
facing each
other.

2. Announce a
category (for
example, first
name).
3. Both teams
reorganize
themselves
alphabetically
by first name
as quickly as
possible.

Here's

4. Announce

how ...

another
category (for
example, home
street address
name).

5. Both teams
reorganize
themselves in
this new
alphabetical
order as
quickly as
possible.
6. Repeat for as
many
categories as

you want.

Additional sorting categories could be last name, birthday (chronologically), favorite food, pet's name, length of time at current organization (numerically), birthplace (alphabetically or geographically from east to west), fantasy vacation destination, formal job title, number of USA states visited in lifetime (numerically), and so forth.

**For
example
...**

**Ask these
questions**

...

- Why is it important for us to know each other beyond a purely work-related context?
- How difficult (or easy) was it to share information about yourself with others?
- What surprises did you have

when
reorganizing
yourselves?

- How can we learn more about each other back on the job?
- Think of more categories than you think you will need. It is better to have too many than not enough.

Tips for success ...

- Stop the game when the energy or enthusiasm starts to fade.
- This game can be played again with different categories or when a new member joins the team.
- You may use this activity to just get acquainted or get a meeting

started without asking the Debrief questions afterwards.

- If the group is large (more than 24 participants), divide into three competing teams.
- Give small prizes for the team that is fastest.

Try these variations

...

- Halfway through the game, the teams combine into one line for a category. Once they have sorted themselves, divide them in half at the midpoint of the long line. They now are two new teams. Continue the game, and they get to know new

participants on their team.

- Keep the group in one group for all sorting.
- If the enthusiasm is high, ask the group to come up with a category to try.

Similarities and Differences

This is ... An introductory activity in which participants are challenged to identify how they are similar and different from each other.

The purpose is ... Participants learn new and different things about each other and themselves from each other on a personal level.

- Individuals do not know each other very well.

Use this when ...

- A significant project or team effort is beginning.

Materials you'll need ...

- Individuals do not
each other very m
- An index card (or)
and a pen for each

Here's how ...

1. Give each partic
card and a pen.
2. Have them divide
into three colum
"Name, Similar, &
3. Have them mingl
their card with a
as possible.
4. For each name,

something that tl
common with the
and one way the

Name	Simil
------	-------

1. Tim	We lov travel.
--------	-------------------

2. Benjamin	We like snuggle with lov ones.
-------------	---

3. Maria	We wa "The Simpssc
----------	--------------------------

**For
example**

...

4. Gail We love to read.

5. Wayne We lift weights regularly

6. Heidee We love to cook.

- How difficult (or easy) is it to share information with others?
- What surprises did you find in finding similarities and differences?

Ask these questions

...

- How can we learn each other back o
- Encourage the pair to duplicate any answer and find a second person you share a love c try to find something also have in common person.
- Encourage them to Similarities and Differences unrelated. For example Similarity is "we both like music," rather than "I like and I don't" as the

**Tips for
success**
...

for something unre
altogether.

- You may use this a
get acquainted or
started without as
Debrief questions
- Limit similarities a
to only work-relate
only personal item
- Divide the group in
four to six particip
each team find on
members have in c
where all member
few minutes, shuff

**Try these
variations**

...

and repeat.

Sweet Stories

This is ... An activity in which participants share a story about themselves based on the color of the candy they have in their hands.

The purpose is ... Participants learn more about each other and learn to trust each other a little more.

Use this when ...

- One or more individuals are new to the group
- Individuals do not know each other very well
- The group knows

other very well (see variation below).

Materials you'll need ...

- A large bag of M&Ms®, Skittles® or other colored candy pieces.

1. Have each participant take one candy.
2. Do not eat it yet.
3. Take turns sharing with the group and based on the following code:

- Blue candy

A time a
work wh
you felt
proud.

- Green c
A boss y
respect
and why

- Yellow
candy: A
reason y
are proud
belong t
organiza

- Brown

**Here's
how ...**

candy: /
embarrass
moment
work.

- Orange
candy: /
at work
you failed

- Purple
candy: /
funny that
that
happened
you at work

- Red car

time at work
when you
were so

4. Eat the candy.

- Why is it important for us to learn about each other at work?
- How difficult (or easy) was it to share information about yourself with other people?
- How can we learn more about each other back on the job?

Ask these questions
...

- Other categories () can be used that relate more closely to the workload, organization, or special project.
- The stories do not have to be "the most" anything—the most embarrassing, the most funny, and so forth. Take that pressure away. Allow participants to share the kind of story they are comfortable sharing with the group.

Tips for success

...

- If you use a candy other than M&Ms® be sure to adjust the coding to match the colors of what you use.
- This activity can be repeated. Just ask for different stories! Consider starting every meeting with one person telling a story, and over time you will hear from everyone.
- Limit the length of stories so no one monopolizes the time.

- Post the story color code so participants can easily match the candy to the story need to tell.
- Divide larger groups (more than 12 participants) into smaller teams to share their stories with each other.
- Remove the words "work" for each color and get to know each other better personally.

- Divide the group into small groups of three to five participants. Give them several minutes to share their stories from one category. Select the best story from the team, and share with the large group.

Try these variations

...

- Use only two categories. Toss a coin to determine which story to tell.
- For the group that

knows each other well, have them tell stories about each other rather than about themselves.

- Get to know each other on a personal level along lines such as these: one thing you learned from your parents, why you like your favorite movie about your kitchen at home, pets you have (or have had), and so forth.

Chapter 5: Cooperation:

Working Together as a Team

Catch!

This is ...

A fast-paced ball-tossing game where participants are encouraged to improve the time it takes to pass the ball around the group.

The purpose is ...

The group sees that improvements can always be made on a process, and that it takes the whole team to make process improvement work.

- The group

needs to be looking to itself (rather than the boss) for ways to improve.

**Use this
when ...**

- A feeling of arrogance ("*We can't get much better than this!*") is strong in the group.
- Group members are not cooperating with each other as well as they

should.

Materials you'll need ...

- A Koosh® ball, beanbag, or similar item that is safe to toss.
 - A stopwatch, watch, or clock with a second hand.
1. Arrange the group in a large circle with everyone standing.
 2. Give the ball to

anyone.

3. Ask him to throw the ball to anyone in the circle.
4. The catcher now throws the ball to someone else in the circle.
5. This continues as each participant always throws the ball to

someone who
has not had it
yet.

6. The last one
throws the ball
back to the
participant who
had it first. The
group has
established
their Pattern.
7. Have them
repeat the
same Pattern
throwing the
ball to the

**Here's
how ...**

same person,
in the same
order as they
did before.
Time them.

8. If anyone
drops the ball,
it goes back to
the first
participant to
start again.
Time keeps
ticking.
9. Announce the
time, and ask
them how

much faster
they think they
can get.

10. Repeat the Pattern, and time them again.
11. Give them 3 minutes to create a strategy to vastly improve their time again.
12. Repeat the

Pattern and
time them
again.

**For
example**

There is no appropriate
example for this activity.

...

- How did you feel
the first time I
timed you? On
subsequent
timings?
*(Nervous,
energized,
competitive,
pressured, etc.)*

- What strategies did you employ to improve your speed? How successful were they?
- What assumptions or limits did you impose on yourselves? (*We had to stay in the same circle order we were in. We had to catch with our*

Ask these questions ...

*hands [not laps,
if sitting]; etc.)*

- How did you feel when participant X dropped the ball?

*(Frustrated,
angry,
depressed,
hopeless,
empathetic,
etc.)*

- What was the key to your success?

- What implication does this have for us back on our jobs?
- Help them be successful. If they forget who gets the ball next, remind them. Just be careful not to take over leadership for the group.
- Be supportive of whoever drops

the ball if the group is not.

Tips for success

...

- Do not offer suggestions on how to improve; let them struggle with it. One of the best ways is for them to rearrange their positions in the circle!
- Watch, and listen to their comments during the

activity. Bring up relevant ones during the Debrief.

- Post the rules of the game so participants can refer to them while they play.
- Establish two different patterns in the group with two different colored balls. Time them accomplishing

both patterns at the same time.

- Form two groups (each with one ball), and do them simultaneously. See if the groups compete more against their own time (which is the stated objective) or against each other's times. Ask how the competitive

Try these

variations

...

pressure helps
or hinders their
efforts on the
job.

- Make this more about dealing with change by asking them to reverse the flow of the ball after a round or two, but still maintain the same or better speed.
- For smaller groups, have

them also say
their name, a
color, a
company
product, and so
forth as they
toss the ball.

Pass the Card

This is ...

A quick moving activity in which participants pass cards from one to another in a relay.

The purpose is ...

Teamwork and the competitive spirit energize participants during times of change.

- The group needs an energizer before or during a draining or very long meeting.

**Use this
when ...**

- Individuals would benefit from a shot of competitiveness.
- Group members are not cooperating with each other as well as they should.

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

- One deck of playing cards for each team.
- A prize for the fastest team

(optional).

1. Divide the group into teams of four to eight participants.
2. Each team sits on chairs in a line side by side.
3. Place a deck of cards on the floor next to the chair at the far right end of each team's

line.

4. Give the instructions, and allow teams 5 minutes to plan their strategy.
5. To play, the participant nearest the deck picks up a card.
6. He then passes the card from his

**Here's
how ...**

left hand to the
right hand of
the participant
to his left.

7. The second participant passes that card to her left hand, then on to the right hand of the next participant.
8. Play continues like this until the last

participant
places the
card in a pile
on the floor
next to her
with her left
hand.

9. No one may
hold more than
one card at a
time.
10. The first team
with all cards
stacked at the
end of their
line wins.

**For
example
...**

As soon as the first participant gets rid of that first card, he can reach down and get the next one to start passing. He does not have to wait for the first card to travel all the way down his line.

- How did you determine your strategy? Did it work?
- How did you feel when a

**Ask these
questions
...**

participant
dropped a card?
*(Angry, worried
about time,
impatient,
frustrated,
empathetic,
etc.)*

- Which strategies worked best?
- When do we have to be this much in sync at work?
- What

implications
does this have
for our team
back on the job?

- Use this opportunity to mix the group up. Arrange teams so that participants who do not normally work together are on the same team.
- As much as possible, have

Tips for success

...

the teams lined up so they can easily see each other. This will increase the competitive nature and also provide distractions!

- Post game rules so participants can refer to them during play.
- Make this more

difficult by
blindfolding
some (just the
first and last?)
or all
participants.

**Try these
variations
...**

- Items other than the cards may be used:
pennies,
paperclips,
items unique to
your workplace,
and so forth.
- Make this more
difficult by using

pads of sticky
notes. Require
that the pad be
reconstructed at
the end of the
team line!

Popcorn

This is ...

A fun activity in which participants, working in pairs, feed each other pieces of popcorn on a spoon while both are blindfolded.

The purpose is ...

Participants learn to cooperate with each other, have fun, and reinforce communication skills.

- Individuals need to slow down and focus.

Use this when ...

- Individuals are not being creative at problem solving.
- The group needs to loosen up, have some fun, and laugh.

Materials you'll need ...

- A blindfold for each participant.
- A spoon for each participant.
- Popcorn.
 1. Have the

participants
pair up.

2. Distribute blindfolds, spoons, and popcorn to everyone.
3. While both are blindfolded, one participant feeds 10 pieces of popcorn to his or her partner on the spoon one at a time.

**Here's
how ...**

4. After they are successful, reverse roles and repeat.

For

example

...

There is no appropriate example for this activity.

- How did you feel when you put on the blindfold?
(Nervous, disoriented, etc.) Why?
- What happened

Ask these questions

...

as you tried to feed each other? (*Popcorn kept blowing off the spoon; She jabbed my nose with the spoon; I had to feel my way; etc.*)

- What ways did you find to communicate, cooperate, and be successful? (*Touch, frequent feedback,*

*overhearing
what someone
else did that
worked, etc.)*

- What implications does this have for us back on the job?
- Prepare by putting small amounts of popcorn in plastic bags for each participant. Some of the

Tips for success

...

popcorn will be dropped, so put more than 10 pieces in each bag!

- Supply something other than popcorn if you know someone is allergic to it.
- Watch to see if anyone cheats with the blindfolds. When is it appropriate

to break the rules?

- Easier, and perhaps tastier, would be small candies.
- Have the participants alternate feeding each other one piece of popcorn instead of all 10 in a row.
- Divide the group into teams of

Try these variations

...

three or more, and have each team member feed the popcorn to the person on the right simultaneously. This is much more difficult and requires much more cooperation and teamwork.

- Use forks to stab the popcorn, instead

of spoons.

Puzzled

This is ... An activity in which participants learn, as they assemble a puzzle, that other teams have some pieces they need, and they have pieces others need.

The purpose is ... Participants see that cooperation across real or perceived team boundaries can be beneficial (sometimes even crucial) for success.

- The group needs

to cooperate within itself or with other groups to be successful.

**Use this
when ...**

- Competitiveness is hindering team efforts.
- Individuals are asking the boss to solve their problems for them.
- One children's puzzle for each small group,

preferably with
20–50 pieces.

- A bag (or box or envelope) for each puzzle's pieces.
- Assemble the puzzle bags in advance (without the group knowing you have done this):
 1. Place all the puzzle pieces

Materials you'll need ...

for each
puzzle in
a
separate
bag.

2. Line up the filled bags in front of you.
3. Remove two to three pieces from each

bag.

4. Place those pieces in other bags, each piece in a different bag.

1. Divide the group into teams of three to six participants. There must be

the same
number of
teams as you
have bags of
puzzles.

**Here's
how ...**

2. Give each team a bag of puzzle pieces.
3. Do not disclose that the bags have been tampered with.
4. Tell the participants that their objective is

to put the
puzzles together
in less than 5
minutes.

5. Have them
begin.

- If they ask for help, decline. Encourage them to use what resources are available to accomplish their objective. Tell them, "All the pieces necessary

For

example

...

to accomplish
your objective are
out."

- If they ask permission to work with other groups, be noncommittal. Say, "You know what your objective is; do what you need to do to achieve it!"
- What assumptions did you make at the beginning of

this activity? (*We had all the pieces for our puzzle in this bag; We were in a race; We did not need any outside help; etc.*)

- Why did you feel this was a competition? (*Conditioned, my natural style, etc.*)
- How did you react when you realized you did not have all the pieces you

**Ask these
questions
...**

needed?
*(Frustrated,
angry, lost, etc.)*
How did you deal
with it then?

- How did you feel
when other
groups came
offering pieces or
asking for some
of your pieces?
*(Imposed upon,
go away, rushed,
confused, etc.)*
- How is this similar
to our work? *(We*

*ask you for help
when we could
solve something
ourselves; We
see everything as
a competition;
etc.)*

- What implications does this have for you back on your jobs?
- Be sure that no two puzzles are exactly the same; otherwise, the value of swapping

the pieces may be lost.

- When the first team discovers they are missing a piece, they may look to you for an explanation. Calmly remind them of their objective (to put the puzzles together), and announce that all the puzzle pieces *are* out.

**Tips for
success**

...

- Do not make the types of encouraging comments that may lead them to believe they are in competition (*Oh, this team is going to win; You guys better hurry up; etc.*).
- Replace the puzzles with Lego® building sets (and their instruction sheets)

having, preferably,
fewer than 80
pieces.

Try these variations

...

- Make the puzzles yourself out of thick (or laminated) paper. This is especially good if you want the completed puzzles to say something—quotes or messages that will help you segue into the meeting's main

topic or focus.

Silence is Golden

This is ... An activity in which small groups draw their vision of an ideal work environment without speaking to each other.

The purpose is ... Participants see how much of what they communicate is conveyed without words.

- Individuals are not communicating well with customers,

suppliers,
partners, and so
forth.

**Use this
when ...**

- Minor conflict is arising in the group because of voice tone or nonverbal cues, not the actual words being used ("all I said was...").
- Language barriers or hearing impairments

confront the group.

- Colored markers for each group.
 - A piece of flipchart paper for each group.
 - Tape to post the drawings.
1. Divide the group into teams of four to six participants.

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

2. Give each group a piece of flipchart paper and some markers.
3. Have each team draw a floor plan or a picture of the ideal work environment for the group. Money is no object, so be creative and have fun with this one!

**Here's
how ...**

4. Participants may not talk to anyone while planning or drawing.

5. After 10 minutes, have each team share their drawing with the group.

- What did the drawings have in common?

- How did you communicate with each other?
(Acted things out, drew small pictures on scrap paper, Wrote notes, etc.)
- How accurate were you in communicating with each other, even though you could not use words? (They

Ask these questions

...

will probably be surprised at how effectively they were able to communicate and work together without words.)

- What implications does this have for us back on the job?
- Studies have shown that 7% of what is

communicated is done with words, 38% with tone of voice, and 55% with nonverbal clues. For telephone conversations, 18% of the content is communicated through words and 82% through tone.

Tips for success

...

- Decide before the activity if you will allow the

group to write notes (using words) to communicate.

- As they work, observe what they do that is effective, and bring them out during the Debrief.
- Give a 1-minute warning before time is up.
- Use molding

clay or building blocks instead of the paper and markers.

- To emphasize the importance of tone of voice (for those who spend much time on phones), allow the participants to talk only with their mouths closed. Their lips will never open, but they

Try these variations

...

can grunt and make other noises with their voice box. The tone will come through!

- Have them draw a solution to a problem your organization currently faces. This will be more difficult and may require more time.

Star Power

This is ...

An activity in which participants form a star shape with a long piece of rope.

The purpose is ...

Participants learn to cooperate with each other, have fun, and reinforce communication skills.

- Individuals are not cooperating well.
- A new group is

Use this when ...

forming and
needs to come
together.

- The group
needs to loosen
up, have some
fun, and laugh.

Materials you'll need ...

- One 40- to 50-
foot rope.
1. Have all
participants
pick up the
rope.
 2. They can move

**Here's
how ...**

their hands
along the rope,
but they
cannot change
places with
each other.

3. They must
form a five-
pointed star
with the rope
in 10 minutes
with no rope
left over at
either end.

The star may be just the
outline of a star or one

**For
example
...**

in which the lines cross over each other, like a star drawn without a pen ever leaving the paper.

- How does this activity relate to teamwork? (*We had to cooperate; We had to agree on things; We had to support the final outcome; We had to listen to each other; etc.*)

Ask these questions

...

- How did you deal with everyone's ideas about the way to proceed?
- Did anyone emerge as the leader? How did they function?
- How did you handle disagreements?
- What implications does this have

for us back on
the job?

- You may want to post a drawing of the star for easy reference. Remember, this will help the team (and you may not want to do that!).
- For larger groups (more than 20 participants), form two

**Tips for
success**
...

groups, and have two ropes, OR, simply use a longer rope. Have at least 2–3 feet of length per participant.

- Have them try another shape, a letter, a word, or your organization's logo.
- Blindfold the participants. If

you blindfold them all, make the shape much simpler—a square or triangle will be difficult enough. How did the group learn to "see?"

Try these variations

...

- Require that the activity be accomplished without speaking. How did the group manage to

communicate?

Or, let some speak and some not. How did the group leverage those who could not speak?

- Select a leader, and blindfold only that person. How did the leader and group overcome the handicap?

Tied!

This is ...

A simple activity in which the participants try to cross the finish line at exactly the same time.

The purpose is ...

Participants see how an activity that looks simple, when it involves coordinating others, rarely is.

- Individuals are breezing through tasks, under-estimating what needs to be

**Use this
when ...**

done.

- Individuals need to slow down and focus.
- Individuals are not cooperating well.
- A long rope or tape to represent a start line and a finish line (optional—a highly visible line in the carpet or flooring may

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

work fine).

1. Line the group up behind a starting line.
2. On your signal, they are to proceed to the finish line.
3. They must all cross the finish line at exactly the same time.
4. If they are not all together, they need to

**Here's
how ...**

go back to the starting line and try again.

5. They need to keep trying until they succeed.

For example

...

Participants might use a military cadence, a countdown, holding hands, or some other clever coordination technique, but usually only after their first efforts fail.

- How easy did this sound at first? (*Simple, piece of cake, etc.*)
- How easy was it? (*Harder to coordinate than we thought, etc.*)
- When have we thought something at work was easy at first and then discovered it was harder to

Ask these questions
...

coordinate
(especially when
it involved the
efforts of
others)?

- What
implications
does this have
for us on the
job?
- Once the activity
begins, no
participant can
stop motion (this
eliminates the

Tips for success

...

clever ruse of having everyone get up to the finish line and stop and wait to just take one step together!).

- This is harder than it seems. Depending on the size of the group, it will generally take 5–10 attempts to succeed.
- Make it more

Try these variations

...

difficult by allowing the participants to look only straight ahead or at the ceiling.

- Have them do the activity while walking backwards.

United Hearts

This is ...

A fast-paced card game in which teams feel a need to compete for points when, actually, they could all win through cooperation.

The purpose is ...

Participants see that competitiveness among them can be detrimental, and flexibility is critical for success.

- The group members need to cooperate

with each other
or with other
groups to be
successful.

Use this when ...

- Competitiveness is hindering team efforts.
- Individuals need to understand the value of being flexible with plans and strategies.

Materials you'll

- One deck of playing cards for

need ...

**every 15
participants.**

1. Divide the group into three teams of two to five participants. Equal sized teams are not critical.
2. Keep the hearts, and give each team an entire suit of cards. They may look at

their cards
during play.

3. Each team's objective is to earn 30 points. As the Dealer, you are not playing for points.
4. Each team must designate one member to be their Leader.
5. Explain the

rules below,
and give them
3 minutes to
plan their
strategy.

6. There will be
13 rounds (one
for each card
in everyone's
hand). For
each round,
you will play
any heart card
face up on the
table. Then
each team
Leader selects

a card and places it face down on the table.

**Here's
how ...**

7. Once the Leaders have all played, flip the cards over. The card with the highest value (excluding your heart) wins the heart points for that team. For example, if the highest card

played is the 8 of clubs, and the heart is a 10, the clubs team gets 10 points.

8. Numbered cards are worth face value; jacks are worth 11 points, queens 12, kings 13, and aces 1 point.

9. If the high card

is a tie, the heart points are lost that round.

10. As cards are played, they are out of play for the remainder of the game.
11. Once play begins, no one may speak.
12. After five rounds, and

again after the ninth round, allow the teams 2 minutes to regroup and discuss their progress.

13. Determine which teams earned 30 points.

If the 4 of clubs, 5 of spades, and 9 of diamonds are played for the jack of hearts, the

diamonds team gets 11 points.

**For
example**

...

If the 4 of clubs, 9 of spades, and 9 of diamonds are played for the jack of hearts, none of the teams will get the 11 points; they are lost forever.

If the 4 of clubs, 4 of spades, and 9 of diamonds are played for the jack of hearts, the diamonds team gets 11 points.

■ What

happened?

- How did you select your Leader?
- What strategy did you have? How did you select it?
- (If no one has said this yet,) how many points were possible altogether? (*91 points*) So, all three teams

Ask these questions

...

could have been successful with a win-in-in solution, right? (Expect surprised looks and smiles as they realize they competed when they did not have to.)

- Why did you compete with each other? (*We assumed it was a competition; We did not want*

*to trust them;
We are
conditioned to
compete; etc.)*

- What implications does this have for our team back on the job? (Do not let your sales force or similar group lose the lesson here. Even they need to realize that, internally, they are not in

competition with others for resources or support, etc.)

- If there are more than 15 participants, extra participants can act as Observers, or two (or more) separate games can be played simultaneously. Designate a

Dealer at each table, who will follow your lead. Remind the Dealers that they are not playing for points.

- If the teams ask about collaborating together, allow it! Even if they figure this out, it will take cooperation and trust to make it

**Tips for
success**

...

happen.

- The rule states that they cannot talk. There is no rule against pointing, grunting, facial expressions, writing, or otherwise communicating with each other.
- Be careful not to suggest that the first team to get 30 points is

better off than others.

- Be careful not to suggest that points beyond 30 are of any value.
- Post the rules so participants can refer to them during play.
- Play a second round, and see if the teams can

Try these variations

...

cooperate
enough so they
each get 30
points.

- Make it a bit easier by allowing them to talk throughout the game.

Chapter 6: Coping: Dealing with Change

Change Time Line

This is ...

An activity in which participants learn from major changes they have worked through.

The purpose is ...

Participants see that, even when changes seem to create problems, they can find ways to overcome and be successful. They will also get to know each other a little better.

- The group is experiencing lots of change at work.

Use this when ...

- The group lacks confidence to accomplish what is ahead of them.
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

Materials you'll need ...

- Paper and pens for each participant.
1. Give a pen and paper to each participant.

2. Have them each remember five major changes they have experienced in their lifetimes.
3. Participants draw time lines of their lives. Mark where each of the major changes occurred with an "X."
4. Have the participants pair up.

5. Ask them to share with their partner one of the major changes.
6. Post these questions for them to answer as they share:

1. What made the change difficult

2. What was the key to

**Here's
how ...**

your
succes
in
dealing
with the
change

3. How di
you fee
before,
during,
and
after th
change

4. How
were
the

other
change
going c
around
that
time
(refer t
the tim
line)
affectir
your
ability t
deal
with thi
one?

- How did you feel
sharing these

experiences with each other? (*I felt sense of closeness; I realized we have more in common; Empathy; etc.*)

- What did you learn from how your partner dealt with their major change
- What did you learn about the compounding effect of changes that are close to each

Ask these questions
...

other? *(Alone they would be manageable, but together, they seemed overwhelming; The way to deal with one adversely affected the next one; etc.)*

- What implications does this have for us back on the job
- Tell the participant that they will be asked to share on

Tips for

success

...

one of the major life changes they remember, not all of them. Share on what is comfortable.

- After the participants share their experiences, have them pair up with someone else and repeat the activity.
- Have the participants share their experiences i

Try these variations

...

teams of three to six. This takes longer, but it will allow them to hear and learn from more experiences than just one or two.

- You may eliminate the time line (and the need for pens and paper). Just have the participants select a major change they have experienced, and

then have the
dialogue.

Guess and Switch

This is ... A guessing game in which participants switch teams often.

The purpose is ... Participants get comfortable with constantly changing teams and allegiances; also they will see how ineffective yes/no questions are.

- The makeup of the group is changing frequently.

Use this when ...

- Individuals rely too much on close-ended questions.
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

Materials you'll need ...

- No materials are necessary for this activity.
1. Divide the group in half.
The teams

gather in
opposite
corners of the
room.

2. One
participant
from each
team leaves
the room.
Together, their
task is to pick
quickly any
object in the
world.
3. They return to
the team

opposite the
one they left.

4. Each team then asks the participant questions to determine what the object is. They may ask only questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no."
5. When a team guesses the

**Here's
how ...**

object, they
clap their
hands to win
the round.

6. Both
participants,
who originally
left the room,
now join the
winning team.
7. Each team
selects a new
participant to
leave the room
for another
round.

8. Play continues until one team captures all members or until a predetermined time limit is reached.

**For
example**

...

The object can be anything—a rake, an iron, a roller coaster, sand, baby oil, a cheetah, a rose, and so forth.

- How did you feel when your team

started
dwindling?
*(Nervous,
threatened,
more
competitive,
frustrated, etc.)*

- How did you feel
as your team
started to grow?
*(Excited and
energized,
superior,
confident, glad
to be part of a
winning team,*

etc.)

- How did you feel when you had to join a different team?

(Reluctant, not welcome, excited to be on the winning team, etc.)

Ask these questions

...

- Did you find a pattern of questioning emerge that proved successful for

the team?

- What kinds of questions could we have asked to guess the object quicker?
(How is this object used? What is the object's size and shape? And other open-ended questions.)
- What implications

does this activity
have for us back
on the job?

- Do not let the teams spend much time in selecting the participant who goes outside. Keep the game moving; make it quick.
- Questions must be answered quietly, or the other team will

**Tips for
success**

...

overhear and
get clues.

- Make the guessing (and thus the rounds) go faster by limiting the object to a category (movie titles, gardening supplies, your organization's products or services, driving a car, etc.) or people (living or

dead).

- If the group is large (more than 24 people), divide them into three or four teams in various corners. After participants from each group come back into the room, have them return to a different team than the one they left.

Try these variations

...

- Instead of asking questions to guess the object, have the participants act it out (like charades), or draw it on a board (like Pictionary®).

Index Towers

This is ...

A building activity in which participants use index cards to create a tower.

The purpose is ...

The group can find creative ways to overcome adversity and be successful, even when changes seem to create problems.

- The group is experiencing lots of change at work.

**Use this
when ...**

- Individuals need to be creative about finding efficiencies despite constant change.
- Individuals would benefit from a shot of competitiveness.
- A yardstick or tape measure.
- 50 index cards for each team.

**Materials
you'll**

need ...

- A roll of tape for each team.
 - Small prizes for the winning team (optional).
1. Divide the group into teams of three to five.
 2. Give each team 25 index cards and a roll of tape.
 3. Each team has 5 minutes to

build the tallest
free-standing
structure
possible, using
only the
materials
provided.

4. The structure must stand long enough for you to measure it.
5. After you measure all structures, have the

Here's

how ...

teams destroy
them.

6. Announce that you have found that the tape violates health laws and must be forfeited.
7. Now give each team 25 more index cards.
8. Each team has 5 minutes to build the tallest free-standing

structure using only the materials provided (the 25 new index cards).

9. Measure the structures and determine the tallest.

- How did you decide on the structure to build each time?

**Ask these
questions
...**

- How did you feel when I removed the tape?
(Despair, challenged, frustrated, etc.)
- What ways did you find to be successful in the second round?
(Cooperated more, found better ways to stack the cards, etc.)
- What

implications
does this activity
have for us back
on the job?

- Most teams will find a way to build an even taller structure without the tape. If they do not, ask if they think that eventually they could do so (given more time to practice or strategize).

Tips for success

...

- Colored index cards invite the team to aim for aesthetics as well as function.
- Be very careful approaching the structures to measure. You don't want to create a slight draft that topples their hard work!
- Start with

staplers instead of tape.

- When you take the tape away, replace it with staplers for round 2. Sometimes it is not so obvious whether change is good or bad.
- Have a third round in which you increase the number of index cards given to

Try these variations
...

the teams or include some larger index cards. Some change is actually good.

- Make the activity go faster by reducing the number of index cards you distribute and then by reducing the time you give them to work.

Machines

This is ...

An activity in which participants create a human machine and then have to change the machine per the customer's request.

The purpose is ...

Participants learn that changes can create opportunity for improvement.

- The group is experiencing lots of change at work.

Use this when ...

- Individuals need to be creative about finding solutions during change.
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

Materials you'll need ...

- No materials are necessary for this activity.
1. Divide the group into

teams of 6–10.

2. Give each team 6 minutes to plan a human machine. All participants must be a part of this machine.

3. Watch each team demonstrate its machine

4. Then, select a

**Here's
how ...**

participant
from each
machine.

Announce that
these "machine
pieces" are
obsolete.

5. The teams
now have 3
more minutes
to adjust or
reinvent their
machines using
their selected
participant in a
new way.

- How did you decide on the machine design?
- How did you handle disagreements in the team?
- How did you feel when I rejected your original design?
(Frustrated and angry with you, hurt that you singled me out, anxious to

Ask these questions
...

improve the design, etc.)

- How do we typically react to changes in our own work environment?
- What implications does this have for us back on the job?
- Encourage the teams to be highly creative in

their efforts, to use sound effects, and so forth.

Tips for success

...

- When selecting the participant who will be obsolete, choose the one who has the most pivotal role in the machine. This will force the team to really work on redesigning it.

- Give a 1-minute warning before time is up.
- Impose a purpose or use for the machine, so the teams are then in competition with each other for the best machine for that purpose.
- Require that the planning, assembly, and

demonstration
be done without
speaking.

- After the first machines have been demonstrated, have the teams find a way to incorporate all their machines into one giant machine. This will take the emphasis off of change and place it on

**Try these
variations
...**

creative
teamwork and
cooperation.

- Have some unusual props available. Assign one or more props to each team. Have them incorporate the prop into their machine design from the beginning or halfway through the activity.

Props could include an eggbeater, a broom, a watering can, a silk flower, and so forth.

Makeovers

This is ... An activity in which participants cut up a picture and then rearrange the pieces into a new image.

The purpose is ... Participants see how new and good things can come from changing what was.

- The group is experiencing lots of change at work.

Use this when ...

- Individuals need to be creative about finding solutions during change.
- Individuals are seeing only the negative aspects of change.
- At least one picture from a magazine for each participant.

Materials

- Scissors and

**you'll
need ...**

glue stick for
each participant.

- A piece of
flipchart paper
or other paper
for the base of
the new picture.
- 1. Allow each
participant to
select one
picture.
- 2. Have her cut
her picture into
small pieces.
The pieces
should be

small enough
that the
original picture
is no longer
evident.

**Here's
how ...**

3. Each participant uses his or her own pieces to create a new picture. Glue the pieces into a collage on flipchart paper.
4. After 10 minutes, have

each
participant
share his
collage and tell
what it was
before he
changed it.

- How did you determine what collage to create?
- How did you feel when I gave you the assignment to create a collage?

Ask these questions

...

(Nervous, because I'm not creative; Anxious to get started; Worried mine might not be good; etc.)

- How do these feeling compare to feelings we have when faced with change at work?
- What was the key to your finishing the task

successfully?

- What implications does this have for us back on the job?
- Have an assortment of pictures. The larger the pictures, the better.
- Do not give any ideas on what collage to

Tips for success

...

create. They may struggle, but their own ideas will work better for them than any suggestion you may have.

- Give a 1-minute warning before the end of time.
- Rather than magazine pictures, begin with head-lines

Try these variations

...

or other bold words. Have the participants cut the letters up and create a new message with their letters. Or use longer phrases: rather than cutting up letters, cut the words, and rearrange them, much like a ransom note might look!

- You can assign

a specific theme
for the collages
such as dealing
with change,
teamwork,
listening skills,
quality, and so
forth.

Numbers

This is ... A fast paced number game in which participants either call numbers out quickly, or they are sent to the end of the line.

The purpose is ... Participants learn to cope with rapid-paced changes.

- The group is experiencing lots of change at work.

Use this when ...

- Individuals need to see that minor mistakes are just that: minor!
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

Materials you'll need ...

- No materials are necessary for this activity.
1. Arrange the group into a

"U" formation.

2. Have them count off down the line so everyone has a number.
3. The first participant begins by calling anyone else's number.
4. Immediately that person must call someone

else's number.

**Here's
how ...**

5. Play continues like this until someone hesitates or calls an incorrect number (either their own number or a number that is not in the group).
6. That participant goes to the

end of the line.
She and
everyone who
was behind her
now have a
new number.

7. Resume play.

- How did you feel when you make a mistake? (*Like a failure, I let the team down, disappointed in myself, embarrassed, etc.*)

- How did it feel to watch someone else make a mistake?
(Empathy, glad it wasn't me, angry or frustrated, disappointed, etc.)
- What is our typical reaction when we make minor mistakes at work? (Point

Ask these questions
...

out that changes lead to some minor mistakes, and we should not focus on them.)

- How did you feel as your number kept changing? How did you feel watching the pressure others were experiencing, but you weren't?
- What

implications
does this have
for us on the
job?

- Have the group set a pace by clapping hands to a beat.
- Quicken the pace so everyone "fails" often and the numbers change frequently.

**Tips for
success**

...

- Watch to see if anyone tries deliberately to trip up those at the beginning of the line. Ask why during the Debrief. Do we not like to see others remain successful?
- When a participant makes a mistake, encourage him

**Try these
variations
...**

or her to take a bow, and have the group applaud him or her. Reinforce the concept that learning from minor mistakes is truly a good thing!

- Use the alphabet instead of numbers.

Puzzled Thumbs

This is ... A puzzle activity in which the rules for puzzle assembly change halfway through the exercise.

The purpose is ... Participants will experience the value that information has when dealing with change. They will also see that their own reactions to change are normal and manageable.

- The group is

experiencing lots of change at work.

- Individuals need to be creative about finding efficiencies despite constant change.

**Use this
when ...**

- Individuals need to understand that most reactions to change are normal and often take time to

work through.

- The group is resisting change.
- One children's puzzle for each small group. The best puzzles have a solid frame and border with 15–25 pieces.
- A stopwatch, watch, or clock with a second

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

hand.

1. Divide the group into smaller teams of two to four.
2. Give each team a puzzle. Have them separate all the pieces and place them face up on the table. No puzzle piece may be touching any

other puzzle
piece to begin.

3. Time the
teams
assembling
their puzzles.
4. Repeat the
puzzle
assembly two
more times;
the teams
should try to
improve their
assembly time.
5. Now, inform

**Here's
how ...**

them that thumbs may no longer be used. Each time a thumb touches a puzzle piece, 1 minute is added to that team's final time.

6. Time the teams assembling their puzzles.

7. Repeat the

puzzle
assembly two
more times;
the teams
should try to
improve their
assembly time.

8. After six
rounds,
compare times
and discuss.

- How did you feel
about the first
three rounds?
(*Energized,*

*excited,
competitive,
foolish making
children's
puzzles at work,
etc.)*

- How did you feel about your last three rounds?
*(Less excited,
angry with you
for prohibiting
thumbs,
discouraged,
frustrated with
our slower*

times, etc.)

- How did you react when I told you that you couldn't use your thumbs any more? (*Excited about the challenge, demotivated, discouraged, angry, etc.*)
- What if I had explained that you couldn't use your thumbs

**Ask these
questions**

...

because we
discovered a
carcinogen on
the puzzle
pieces that
affected humans
ONLY when it
touched their
thumbs? (*I'd be
less angry,
happy you're
watching out for
us, angry we
had already
been exposed,
etc.*)

- How does having information about changes help you cope at work?
- What could have been done to make the last three rounds more productive for you? (*Watch for whether the group focuses on what they could do/control*)

or what you could do/control, pliers or other new tools, etc.)

- What implications does this have back on the job?
- As you watch the clock, call out times as the teams finish. They can record their own times. Or, have each

team time
themselves with
the second
hands on their
own watches.

Tips for success

...

- After you announce the thumb rule, listen to their comments. They will often say things such as, "What a stupid rule. This is going to slow us down..." These remarks make

for great
discussion
afterwards!

- Tell half the groups the reason for Thumbs Rule and the other half not. Compare the differences in attitudes and times between these groups.
- For competitive

groups, keep a running record of best times on a flipchart or board.

- The task can be something other than puzzles—towers of plastic building blocks, house of cards, lines of dominoes, and so forth.
- Make it more team-focused by

recording only the time of the slowest team. The teams will learn to share best practices with each other to better everyone's times.

Try these variations

...

- Switch puzzles after the first three rounds. • After six rounds, remove the puzzle frame for another three

rounds (still not allowing thumbs), or blindfold the participants. These more difficult changes will simulate the feeling of constant change that many feel at work. Afterwards, discuss how the changes compounded reactions. What

can be done to minimize the negative impact of that phenomenon?

- Blindfold only one person on each team, but allow only that person to still use his or her thumbs. How did the teams work around the blindness and leverage the available

thumbs?

Simon Sez

This is ... A Simon Says activity that twists the rules for play.

The purpose is ... Participants learn to listen to instructions and pay attention to changed rules.

- The group is experiencing lots of change at work.
- Individuals are not listening

Use this

when ...

well.

- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

- No materials are necessary for this activity.
1. Select someone to be Simon.
Everyone else stands facing him.

2. Simon calls out simple commands.
3. If the command begins with "Simon says..." participants must *not* obey, or they are eliminated from play.
4. If the command does not begin with "Simon

**Here's
how ...**

says..."

participants
must obey the
command, or
they are
eliminated
from play.

5. Simon tries to eliminate everyone from play.
6. Repeat with a new Simon if time allows.

"Lift one foot."

**For
example
...**

(Everyone does it.)

"Simon says scratch
your eyebrow." (No one
does it.)

"Touch your nose."
(Everyone does it.)

"Raise your right hand."
(Everyone does it.)

- How did it feel
to play this
children's game
backwards? (*It
was confusing,
easy, harder to
concentrate on*

*the opposite of
what I knew,
etc.)*

- How did you feel when you were eliminated?
(Defeated, glad to have the pressure off, angry with myself for messing up, etc.)

**Ask these
questions**

- What rules (policies) have we turned

...

upside down
here lately?

- How hard was it for Simon to give directions differently? How does this compare to a manager caught up in change at work? *(It may be just as hard for him or her to adjust as the rest of us; He or she may be*

resistant; He or she may make mistakes; etc.)

- What implications does this have for us back on the job?
- Encourage Simon to do the action as he's commanding them, whether he says, "Simon says..." or not. Many

Tips for success

...

participants get locked into following the visual clue, not the verbal cue.

- Even if a participant just makes a start to do as "Simon says," they are eliminated.
- Just for fun, replace "Simon" with the name of your

organization's
president or
CEO.

- Have two
Simon's up there
alternating
commands with
or without
"Simon says...",
working together
to eliminate
participants.
How did listening
to two people
give commands
affect the
staying power of

**Try these
variations**

...

the participants?

- More difficult?
Have two
Simons. One is
obeyed only
when he says,
"Simon says,"
and the other is
obeyed only
when she does
not say, "Simon
says."

Wrong-Handed Picture

This is ...

A drawing activity in which participants use the hand they normally do not use for writing.

The purpose is ...

Participants get a sense of how they react to change and learn that their own reactions to change are typical or normal.

- The group is experiencing lots of change at work.

Use this when ...

- Individuals need to understand that most reactions to change are normal and often take time to work through.
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

Materials you'll need ...

- Paper and pens for each participant.

1. Give a pen and paper to each participant.
2. Give the participants 6 minutes to draw a picture of something in their office or workspace.
3. Participants must draw this object with the hand they normally do not use for

Here's

how ...

writing.

4. Have the participants exchange their pictures with someone else.
5. This participant will label the picture according to what they think it is and give it back to its artist.

- How many objects were guessed correctly?
- How did it feel to use your other hand?
(Awkward, confusing, not that bad, etc.)
- How did those feelings affect your picture?
(Made it more shaky; I put less into it; etc.)

Ask these questions

...

- How did you work through those feelings?
(Sheer determination; I asked for help; reassured myself; etc.)
- How do those feelings compare with the feelings we have regarding the changes we are experiencing?

- What implications does this have for us back on the job?
- Post the pictures around the break room, conference room, or lunchroom, so participants can refer to them and be reminded of what they learned from this

activity.

Tips for success

...

- Take the emphasis off artwork, so participants do not shy away from drawing.
- For participants who are adamant about not drawing, have them write a sentence or two describing the object. The crooked

handwriting will be just as much a catalyst for learning as the drawing would have been.

- Give a 1-minute warning before time is up.
- Use colored markers or colored pencils to add an element of creativity to the activity.

**Try these
variations
...**

- Make this more difficult by having them draw one of the changes currently happening at work that is affecting them.
- Rather than draw the object, have the participants write a sentence or two describing it.

- Have the participants pair up. Take turns describing an object to a partner so that he can draw it with his other hand. This variation will focus on communication skills as well as dealing with change.

Chapter 7: Creativity:

Solving Problems

Together

Seven Hands

This is ... An activity in which participants solve an ancient stacking puzzle.

The purpose is ... Participants learn how to work together toward a solution.

- The group has difficulty dealing with conflict over processes or methods.

Use this ■ Individuals are impatient with delays

when ...

that keep them from moving forward quickly.

- Individuals need help seeing patterns emerge in problem

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

- Washable ink markers or pens.
 - Three sheets of paper for each team
1. Divide the group into teams of four to seven.

2. In each team, all participants mark the backs of the hands with a number from 1 to 10 (if the team has fewer than seven participants, some may have to mark both hands).
3. Lay three pieces of paper in front of each team.
4. Participants stack their hands on or on the paper in order from

"7" on the bottom
to "1" on the top
This is the "start
position.

**Here's
how ...**

5. Each team is to
restack their har
in the exact sam
order (with "7" o
the bottom) usin
only these move

1. Move
only or
hand a
time.

2. Move a
hand o

another
hand (or
stack of
hands)
onto an
empty
paper.

3. Move
only the
top hand
on a
stack.
4. Never
move a
hand o
top of a

lower
number
hand.

"3" can never be placed on
top of "1" or "2."

"3" can be placed on top of
"4" or "5" or "6" or "7" or an
empty paper.

For

example .. "5" cannot be placed on top
of "1" or "2" or "3" or "4."

"5" cannot be pulled out from
under any number of hand
it can be moved only when
it is on top.

- What strategy did

you use to be successful?

- How were differences of opinion about how move handled in y team?
- Did you have a leader? How was or she selected?
- When someone or your team thought or she knew the solution or at least the next move, how

Ask these

questions

...

did he or she
behave? How did
you respond to that?

- Did you ever feel like you were backtracking? How did that make you feel? (*Frustrated, like we were wasting time, we had messed up, etc.*)
- When do we backtrack to move forward in our organization?

- What implications does this have for back on the job?
- This solution can be accomplished in 13 moves.
- You can get a sense for the solution by trying the puzzle ahead of time. Lay seven index cards and stack them according to the instructions above
Start solving!

Tips for

success

...

- Watch and listen to comments made during the activity. Bring up relevant ones during the Debrief.
- Use this opportunity to mix participants up. Arrange teams so that participants who do not normally work together are the same team.
- If you have less time, use only five

(easy) or six
(moderate) hands
instead of seven.

Try these variations

...

- Use blocks or some other objects. The dynamics change considerably when the participants are not touching each other. If you have several teams, you may use hands, some blocks. Compare their responses to the Debrief questions.

Balloon Sculptures

This is ... A fun activity in which participants create a balloon sculpture that reflects the team.

The purpose is ... The group members openly express their commitment to the team.

- A new team is forming and needs to come together.
- Creative thinking

Use this when ...

is not happening
very much.

- Individuals are not cooperating well.
- The group needs a shot in the arm of team spirit.
- One long balloon (the kind circus clowns use) for each participant and some extras.

Materials

**you'll
need ...**

- A balloon pump (optional but highly recommended, often included with the purchase of the balloons).

**Here's
how ...**

1. Give each participant one balloon.
2. Have the entire team create a balloon structure that reflects their

commitment to
the team.

**For
example
...**

Balloons linked together
may suggest
interdependence,
balloons touching may
represent connectivity,
balloons on the bottom
may suggest supporting
others, and so forth.

- How does this activity relate to teamwork? (*We had to work together; We had to agree on*

Ask these questions

...

things; We had to support the final outcome; Each balloon reflected our individual input; etc.)

- How did you deal with everyone's ideas about the sculpture?
- How did you handle disagreements?

- What implication does this have for us back on the job?
- Have the balloons blown up before the activity if possible.
- Have extra balloons ready for the few that will break.
- Do not blow the balloons up

**Tips for
success**

...

completely.

Leave an inch or more to allow for bending and stretching.

- Watch for team behaviors during the activity that you can bring up during the Debrief.
- If the group consists of intact work teams, divide the group into those

teams. Have them each create a sculpture. Then have them share their creation with the others. If there are fewer than five participants in a team, you may need to make more balloons available for them.

- Have the team think of a team

Try these variations

...

name that complements their sculpture and reinforces their commitment to the team.

- Use building blocks instead of balloons. Give each participant five or more blocks.
- Instead of balloons, use your

organization's
own products or
items to which
your group can
particularly
relate.

Card Stack

This is ... An activity in which participants organize a random stack of cards into the best arrangement possible.

The purpose is ... Participants learn to cooperate with each other, have fun, and reinforce communication skills.

- Individuals need to understand the value of being flexible with plans and strategies.

Use this

when ...

- Creative problem solving is not happening very much.
- Individuals are not cooperating well.

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

- A set of 16 random playing cards for each team.
1. Divide the group into teams of three to five.
 2. Give each team a set of 16 playing cards.

3. Have the teams
out all their cards
a grid (four rows
and four columns
4. The object is for
them to reduce t
16 cards down t
one stack, or the
smallest number
stacks possible.
5. Explain these rul
 1. A card
stack)
be mov
any
distan

horizon
or
vertical
but nev
diagon

2. It must
always
end its
move c
top of
anothe
card (c
stack)
is the
same r
or suit.
can ne'

**Here's
how ...**

take an
empty
space.

3. Once a
card is
placed
top of
another
card, the
resulting
stack is
moved
one unit
down
its top
card (a
cards

below
becom
irreleva
for the
remain
of the
game).

6. Allow the teams
minutes to play.

A 2 of diamonds may move
horizontally 1 space to cover
a stack topped by a 4 of
diamonds (matching suit) or
vertically 3 spaces to cover
2 of clubs (matching rank)
cannot be moved diagonally

**For
example
...**

for any reason.) Once the
moved to cover the 4, that
becomes irrelevant. The n
stack, consisting of the 2,
4, and cards below the 4,
now moved as one unit ba
on the top card, the 2 of
diamonds. Or, the reverse
move could have been ma
The stack topped with a 4
diamonds could have beer
moved horizontally to cove
the 2 of diamonds. The
resulting stack, with the 2
diamonds on the bottom, i
now moved according to it
top card, the 4 of diamonc

- How close were you to the goal of one stack?
- What affected your final result? Since each set of cards is different, how did available resources affect the outcome? Does this happen every time?
- How did you deal with everyone's ideas about the way to proceed?

Ask these

questions

...

- How does this act relate to teamwork?
(We had to cooperate; We had to agree on a process; We had to listen to each other; etc.)
- Did anyone emerge as the leader? How did he or she function?
- How did you handle disagreements?
- What implications does this have for

back on the job?

- Post the rules so participants can refer to them during play.
- Help the teams remember that only one card is on top of each or more other cards in that card stack move as one unit. Only the top card remains relevant to play.
- Stacks can move on top of other stacks or create a new stack.

**Tips for
success**

...

Again, only the top card remains relevant to play.

- Play with a set of cards beforehand so you get a sense of the card movement.
- Give the teams exactly the same set of 16 cards. Increase the competition by announcing the exact configuration of cards from which all teams begin play.

- Use more cards for greater difficulty, fewer cards to finish in less time (but use fewer than 12 cards does not allow the team to grasp the learning points).

Try these variations

...

- Allow one diagonal move per game. How does the added "flexibility" impact the final outcome? No change is bad!
- Have the teams remember how the

configured their ca
the first time. Play
another round, and
see if they can
improve their resu
Add a level of cha
by having one
participant from ea
team move to a
different team for
second round. How
did this new pair c
eyes affect the
results?

Consultants

This is ...

An activity that allows participants to give each other advice on how to handle work problems.

The purpose is ...

Participants get help solving problems or get creative ideas for dealing with work issues.

- Individuals are not helping or supporting each other very well.

Use this when ...

- Individuals need to see the value of others' input and help.
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

Materials you'll need ...

- Paper and pens for each participant.
 1. Each participant writes one

problem or concern he or she currently faces at the top of a piece of paper. Give the group 2 minutes to do this.

2. Have everyone pass their papers to the participant on their left.
3. Each participant has

**Here's
how ...**

1 minute to
read the
problem in
front of him or
her and write
some advice.

4. Pass the
papers again,
and repeat as
often as time
allows.
5. Return the
papers to the
original
owners.

Problem:

- I have trouble making eye contact when giving negative feedback.

Solutions:

- Try practicing in a mirror.
- Make sure your feedback is not attacking or otherwise making the person feel defensive; then

**For
example
...**

maybe it won't
be so hard.

- Role-play with a friend.
- Remember, it may not be as negative as you fear it is!
- Watch how easily Jolene does it, she's a pro!
- How many got one or more

ideas that will truly help them resolve their issue?

- How did you feel having to give advice? (*On the spot, at a loss, honored and respected, pressured to come up with something fantastic, etc.*)
- Why do we not ask each other

Ask these questions
...

for help more often? (*Do not want to impose, think we have to have the answer ourselves, do not trust others will have any good ideas, etc.*)

- What implications does this have for us back on the job?

- Encourage partial advice. If a participant cannot think of advice, he or she can write a few words of encouragement and support or suggest another resource to go to for advice.

Tips for success

...

- The advice does not have to be revolutionary or complete. Usually the first

thought that
comes to mind
is a good one.
Even if it is not a
very good one, it
may prompt
someone else to
come up with a
better one!

- Sit in a circle.
The first
participant
explains briefly
his or her
problem or
concern. All

**Try these
variations**
...

other
participants take
turns offering
advice out loud.
The first
participant
cannot say a
word (to explain
why something
will not work, for
example)—just
listen and thank
the others for
their help.

- This activity can
work for
creative idea

generation
rather than
problem solving.
For example,
where should
we go for our
holiday dinner,
how can we
increase
community
service
participation,
and so forth.

Improve This

This is ... A very quick activity in which participants try to improve their seating arrangement with no specific goal in mind.

The purpose is ... Participants learn that objectives or goals must be specific; that assumptions left unchecked can sabotage an effort.

- Individuals need to see the value of setting clear

and specific goals.

**Use this
when ...**

- Individuals are making assumptions or not asking questions for clarification.
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

**Materials
you'll**

- No materials are necessary for

need ...

this activity.

1. Announce to the group that they have exactly 60 seconds to improve their seating arrangement.

**Here's
how ...**

2. Do not give any further instruction. Look at a clock and tell them to begin ... now!

3. If they ask for clarification, simply repeat the original instructions.
 4. Stop the activity after 60 seconds and discuss.
- Did you meet your objective?
(Yes, because I am closer to the window; No, because I'm not

sure what the objective was; I'm not sure...)

- What was your objective? Was it clear? (If they think it was clear, ask them to define "improve," and then show how it could have meant to get more people up front, or to get in a better circle, or to sit boy-girl-

boy-girl, etc., to show there were assumptions made.)

Ask these questions

...

- Did you seek clarification? Why not? Or what happened when you tried?
- How does this situation relate to the workplace? (*We often try to accomplish things when we*

are not clear on the real goal or the specific criteria for success; We often don't ask for clarification, and if we do, we don't press until we get what we truly need to succeed; etc.)

- What can we do to prevent this kind of thing happening back

on the job?

- After giving the instructions, do not ask if there are any questions. Look at the clock to discourage their questions. It is amazing how quickly anyone wanting clarification will back off if the source appears elusive. Usually,

the pressure of the group will discourage anyone from not moving quickly.

- If they directly ask for clarification, say, *"You determine for yourselves what "improve" means. You are all adults. It seems pretty obvious."* During the Debrief,

point out how similar this is to responses back on the job.

Tips for success

...

- Do not be surprised (and do not stop them!) if they start moving tables and chairs to "improve" their seating arrangement.
- During the Debrief, do not

beat them up for
their behavior.
Remember, you
set them up.
The purpose is
to show them
how often their
work
environment
sets them up
like this, and
how they
typically
respond.

- As they
rearrange
themselves,

listen to their comments. They will say things such as, *"I don't know what she wants, but let's try this..."* Bring these up (without pointing at who said what) during the Debrief.

- This does not have to be done at the beginning of a meeting.

Done at any other time, it can also energize the group that is lagging a bit.

- For more focused and in-depth learning, you can give them a specific work goal and have them improve it. For example, *Improve order processing* is vague, as

Try these variations

...

stated;
improving it will
be difficult
without getting
clarity about
successful
customer
service. *Be
more helpful to
customers* is
equally vague.

- After doing this activity as outlined, try variations wherein you are explicit about

what you want
them to
accomplish, and
see how closely
the group meets
your
expectations.
Let others take
a turn being
specific with the
goal.

One-Worded Stories

This is ... A story telling activity in which participants construct a story together by contributing one word at a time.

The purpose is ... Participants practice cooperating and making each other look good.

- Individuals are not cooperating well.
- Individuals are focusing too

**Use this
when ...**

much on
themselves.

- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

- No materials are necessary for this activity.
1. Explain that the group will create a story together, one word at a time.

2. The word used must be as interesting as possible, and it must make the word of the preceding participant work as well as possible.

**Here's
how ...**

3. Select one participant to demonstrate how "Once upon a time..." might come out with each

of you
alternating
saying those
words.

4. After the story is over, try another one or two (the group will get better at this).

Participant 1: "Once"

Participant 2: "upon"

Participant 3: "a"

Participant 4: "time"

For

example Participant 5: "my"

... Participant 6: "uncle"

Participant 7: "and"

Participant 8: "his"

Participant 9: "ugly..."

- How many felt the person after you said the "wrong" word, because that was not what you meant to have come out? How did that make you feel?

*(Angry,
frustrated,
critical, etc.)*

- How would you compare the collective story of the group with what you may have come up with on your own? *(It was more creative and original; It made less sense; It was more fun; etc.)*

**Ask these
questions**

...

- Who did not like where the story went? Why not? What could you have done had this been a work situation?
- Which story was the best? Why?
- What implications does this have for us back on the job, especially when someone does

not understand
what you
intended?

- Keep the pace moving along quickly, or the flow of story will be lost repeatedly.
- End the story when it feels like it has run its course, or the energy and enthusiasm for that one has

**Tips for
success**

...

waned.

- Encourage participants to speak loudly and very clearly.
- To keep the story moving, allow participants the option of pointing to the next person when they want to pass.
Afterwards, ask

how the group felt about those who passed. Did anyone pass more than others? How does the group interpret that behavior? Are there some who "pass" at work more often than others?

- To encourage teamwork, allow other participants to

Try these variations

...

offer to take someone's turn if they hesitate. Afterwards, ask the how the group felt about those who offered help. Did anyone hesitate more than others? Did anyone jump to the rescue more than others?

- Use paper. Have each participant start a poem

with one line.
Pass to the left.
Add a line that
rhymes. Pass to
the left four
more times.
Read the poems
out loud.

- Don't take turns
at all. Let
whoever wants
to add a word
do so. Did
someone
dominate? Did
anyone not
participate?

Paper Shuffle

This is ... An activity in which participants put a newspaper in numerical or page order after it has been shuffled.

The purpose is ... Participants learn to cooperate with each other, have fun, and reinforce communication skills.

- Individuals are not cooperating well.

Use this when ...

- A new group is forming and needs to come together.
- The group needs to loosen up, have some fun, and laugh.

Materials you'll need ...

- One newspaper with all pages completely shuffled and out of order for each team.
- Small prizes for

the winning team
(optional).

1. Divide the group into teams of four to six participants.
2. Give each team one newspaper, completely shuffled.
3. Have the team sort and reorganize the newspaper

**Here's
how ...**

back into its original order.

- How does this activity relate to teamwork? (*We had to cooperate; We had to agree on a process; We had to listen to each other; etc.*)
- How did you deal with everyone's ideas about the way to proceed?

Ask these

questions

...

- Did anyone emerge as the leader? How did he or she function?
- How did you handle disagreements?
- What implications does this have for us back on the job?
- Use an identical

Tips for success

...

newspaper for each team. If you use other materials, make sure the number of pages given to each team is equal.

- Do not give any suggestions or advice before or during the task. Let the team members figure things out for themselves.

- Use pages ripped from an old book, but cut off the page numbers first!
- Use a long document from your organization, such as a procedures manual.
- Do not allow the participants to speak during this activity.

**Try these
variations
...**

- If the group is too small to form teams, time the group performing the task. Then reshuffle the paper and see if they can improve their time.
- A follow-up activity for fun and to build camaraderie is to have each team use their

newspaper and
some tape to
create a
costume for one
of their
teammates. The
teams can
compete for
most original,
most funny,
most beautiful,
and so forth.

Chapter 8: Teamwork: Appreciating and Supporting Each Other

Blame Game

This is ... A quick standstill activity in which participants try to determine who moved first and then assign blame.

The purpose is ... Participants see that everyone is responsible for group behavior.

- Individuals blame others for group problems that they also influence.
 - Energy is being wasted finding
- Use this**

when ...

culprits and
scapegoats.

- You don't have pre time and/or material for anything more elaborate.

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

- No materials are necessary for this activity.
1. Arrange the group in a large circle, with everyone standing.
 2. Find your Idol:

1. You be
by
pointing
someo
in the
circle.
Keep
pointing

2. That
particip
now
points
someo
else ar
keeps
pointing

3. Continue until everyone is pointing at someone else, at the last participant then points to you.

**Here's
how ...**

4. Stop pointing (drop your hands) and fix

your eyes
on the
participant
you were
pointing
at. The
participant
becomes
your Idol

3. Explain that the objective is to watch your Idol closely and copy his or her every action.
4. Now ask the group

to stand perfectly still. No one may move *unless* his or her Idol does. As soon as if his or her Idol moves (twitches, coughs, blinks, etc.), he or she is required to mimic that movement exactly and then be still again.

5. Begin the game play for several minutes.

■ We were supposed

to stand still—what happened? (Expect some participants immediately to start blaming their Idol for moving.)

- Who knows who started the movement? (Allow for some accusations; inevitably it will be difficult or impossible to pinpoint who really started each movement.)

Ask these

questions

...

- How much does it matter who started once it got started
- How much energy we spend looking scapegoats?
- How are we to blame for perpetuating certain behaviors that eventually become team norms? What examples of this do we have here at work?
- What implications

does this have for
back on the job?

- Small movements bound to happen. When they do, the movement will be duplicated around group endlessly. Usually it will be exaggerated.

Tips for success

...

- If the movement goes out of hand, just stop the game, refocus everyone, and start again.

**Try these
variations
...**

- Designate one participant as "where the buck stops." When movement starts and moves around the group, that participant will NOT repeat it. This variation is effective after a few rounds of the regular activity. Ask how much influence one person can have in affecting team behavior.

But Nothing (Feedback)

This is ...

A quick verbal activity in which participants give each other personal feedback using "but..."

The purpose is ...

Participants learn how easily "but..." can interfere with constructive feedback by creating defensiveness, even when they mean well. They will also learn to replace "but..." with "and..."

**Use this
when ...**

- Feedback is not being received very well.
- Individuals feel like others are not listening with open minds.
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

- No materials are necessary for this activity.

1. Have the participants pair up.
2. Each participant has 30 seconds to think of something she likes about the other's outfit and one way the outfit could be improved.
3. The first participant tells the other what

**Here's
how ...**

she likes first,
then says,
"but..." and
finishes the
sentence with
how it could be
even better.

4. The other
participant
then does the
same to the
first
participant.
5. Now have
each
participant

repeat what
she just said,
replacing "but"
with "and."

"I like that tie, but it
would bring out your
blue eyes better if it was
red."

"I like that tie, and it
would bring out your
blue eyes better if it was
red."

**For
example**

...

"That is a nice dress,
but you would look even
more professional if you
had earrings, too."

"That is a nice dress,
and you would look even
more professional if you
had earrings, too."

- How did it feel
to hear "but?"
*(Annoying,
defensive,
insincere, etc.)*
How did it feel
to hear "and?"
*(Helped,
respected,
supported, etc.)*
- What does "but"
usually mean?

**Ask these
questions
...**

*(Disregard what
you just heard,
because here is
the real truth.)*

- Why do we say "but" so often when giving suggestions or feedback?
- What implications does this have for us back on the job?

Tips for success

...

- Share an example to give participants a sense of how the statements should sound.
- Make sure all pairs have finished their "but" statements before giving the cue to make the "and" statements.
- Point out that the word "but"

usually negates everything that precedes it.

- The more personal the feedback, the better. If the group is uncomfortable giving feedback on each other's outfits, though, select something else, such as the coffee in the lunchroom, a movie they have

both seen, and
so forth.

- After the meeting, ask for feedback on the meeting without the "but." (*I liked that we had an agenda, and next time I hope we can stick to it better.*)

**Try these
variations**
...

- If the group is comfortable giving feedback to each other

already, have them do it on their recent job performance rather than their outfit.

- Add an element of fun to this activity by starting with participants making something creatively (with clay, markers, balloons, building blocks,

etc.), and then
give the
feedback to
each other
about the
creation rather
than their outfits.

But Nothing (Ideas)

This is ... A quick, verbal activity in which participants give each other feedback on their ideas using "yes, but..."

The purpose is ... Participants learn how easily "yes, but..." can shut down communication and creativity, even if well intentioned. They will also learn to replace "yes, but..." with "yes, and..."

Use this when ...

- Ideas are being shot down frequently; creativity is being stifled.
- Individuals feel like others are not listening with open minds.
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

Materials

- No materials are

**you'll
need ...**

necessary for
this activity.

1. Have the participants pair up.
2. Each pair is to plan a vacation together (money is no object).
3. One partner starts by suggesting something to the other.

**Here's
how ...**

4. The other responds by saying, "Yes, but..." and finishes her sentence.
5. The first partner then responds by saying, "Yes, but..." and finishes her sentence.
6. The conversations continue back

and forth this way for 2 minutes.

7. Then, have the same pairs do the same thing with only one change—each sentence must begin with "Yes, and..."
8. The conversations continue this way for 2 minutes.

"I want to go someplace warm."

"Yes, but let's make sure it's not Florida."

"Yes, but Puerto Rico could be nice."

"Yes, but I hope one of us speaks Spanish."

"Yes, but we could bring a dictionary, if necessary."

"I want to go someplace warm."

"Yes, and let's make sure it's not Florida."

**For
example
...**

"Yes, and St. Martin could be nice."

"Yes, and I hope one of us speaks French."

"Yes, and we could bring a dictionary, if necessary."

- How did it feel to hear "but?"
(Annoying, defensive, competitive, etc.) And how did it feel to hear "and?"
(Accepted,

*listened to,
respected, etc.*

**Ask these
questions**

...

- Did you get along further with your plans during the first or second round? Why?
- Why do we say "yes, but..." so often? (*It is ingrained in us; The "but" allows us to disagree without being disagreeable;*

etc.)

- When is "yes, but..." useful or appropriate?
- What implication does this have for us back on the job?
- Read the examples above to give participants a feel for how the conversation might go.

Tips for success

...

- Encourage them to keep the conversation moving. They are not planning a real vacation, so they do not have to be accurate, precise, or realistic.
- The second dialogue does not have to duplicate word for word the first dialogue.

**Try these
variations
...**

- Ask the Debrief questions after the first round of "buts" while the team's thoughts and feelings are still fresh.
- Plan a party, family reunion, or any other elaborate event that might be fun.
- Divide the participants into

small groups
instead of pairs.
The "Yes, but..."
conversation
goes around the
circle.

First Impressions

This is ... An activity in which participants determine their first impressions of people picked at random from magazines.

The purpose is ... Participants see how strong and important others' first impression of them can be.

- Individuals interact with customers a great deal.

Use this when ...

- First impressions of the group are critical for their success.
- Individuals are resisting their uniforms or other aspects of "the look" you want.
- One envelope for each team that contains four or five pictures of

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

people from magazines. Avoid famous or recognizable people. Avoid settings and backgrounds that are not neutral.

1. Divide the group into teams of four to six.
2. Give each group an envelope

containing
pictures of
various people.

**Here's
how ...**

3. They have 6 minutes to discuss their first impressions of the people based solely on what they see in the picture.
4. Have them report back to the larger

group on one of the pictures to which their team felt the strongest first impression.

"This woman is probably a professional. Look at the way her head is held up high. She's probably assertive and very sure of herself. Oh, and check out that necklace. Doesn't it just scream "success"?

"No, I think that necklace

**For
example
...**

begs for attention! I agree she looks pretty assertive, though. She also seems to..."

- How easy was it to agree on your first impressions of these people?
- What were some of the reasons for disagreement?
(Different upbringing, different history with a certain

Ask these questions

kind of look, etc.)

...

- What judgments are others making about us and the way we present ourselves?
- What implications does this have for us on the job?
- Keep the

Debrief away from discussing whether first impressions are fair or not.

Accept that they happen, and focus on how you can leverage that fact for your organization.

Tips for success

...

- Collect the pictures from various magazines. Try for as eclectic a

mix as possible
for each
envelope.

- Be sensitive to racial or gender biases in your group and the pictures.
- Give a 1-minute warning before discussions are to end.
- You can focus the first impressions

specifically on facial expressions, clothing, body language, or whatever else you want to emphasize.

- You could refocus the Debrief to make this discussion more about diversity—accepting others for who and what they are.

Try these variations

...

After giving out the envelopes of pictures, ask the teams to decide which one they would most want to have join their team, and which one they would least like to have join their team. Why?

- Have the teams "fix" each picture by identifying how they would improve the look

of each one to make them ready to join their team.

Focus the Debrief on what they learned from each other concerning how they feel the group should be presenting themselves.

- Ask what product or service each pictured person

would be
representing or
selling.

Junk to Jewels

This is ... An activity in which participants take work-related items and show how those reflect what each participant brings to the strength of the team.

The purpose is ... Participants appreciate their own and each others' contribution to the team's success.

- A significant project or work effort is

beginning.

**Use this
when ...**

- Individuals are not feeling confident about their ability to get the job done.
- Individuals need to bond together.
- An array of items commonly found in your work environment—

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

paper clips,
pens, erasers,
calculators,
coffee mugs,
staplers, sticky
notes, rubber
bands, and so
forth.

1. Have each participant select an item that best represents what he or she feels he or she has to contribute to

the team's
success.

2. Have each participant share with the group why she chose the object she did.
3. Give the team 5 minutes to now make a sculpture using their items.
The final sculpture should show

**Here's
how ...**

how the individual parts would come together to strengthen the team and ensure success.

"I chose a calculator because I tend to be very analytical. I like to find solutions. I get more from the search for the answer than I do from the glory of having found it."

For

example

"I also chose the

...

calculator, but for me, it is because I am very detail focused.

Approximations and guesses are not good enough for me. So I will attend to the details for this group."

- Why is it that the same item meant different things to different people?
- What were you thinking as you

Ask these questions

...

tried to
incorporate
everything into a
sculpture? (*I
wasn't sure how
the stapler could
be included; I
wanted the pen
to be more
central; Some
were more
concerned
about the
finished product
than others;
etc.*)

- What implications does this have for us back on the job?
- If the group is large (more than 15 people), divide the group into teams that represent intact work groups.
- Have more than one of each item on the table so

Tips for success

...

several participants can choose the same thing (for different reasons?).

- A formal Debrief may be unnecessary if you discuss as participants each share their strengths.
- You can make this activity more personal by

having the participants select the item that best reflects their personality, and then explain why.

Try these variations

...

- Make this a development activity. Have the participants select the item that best represents what they want to develop in

themselves.

Invite the others
to support and
assist them.

Kudos

This is ...

A recognition activity in which their peers, not their boss, appreciate the participants.

The purpose is ...

Participants receive recognition and appreciation from each other and have it reinforced by the whole team.

- A significant project or work effort has been completed—to

celebrate the
success.

**Use this
when ...**

- Individuals are feeling down or less confident about themselves.
- Individuals need to recognize and appreciate what's going right among themselves.
- Individuals need to bond

together.

Materials you'll need ...

- A box or two of Kudos® candy bars.
 1. Show a box of Kudos® bars to the group, and make sure everyone knows what the word kudos means.
 2. Explain that they are to use the candy bars

to recognize
each other for
things they
have
accomplished.

3. Anyone can
give anyone
else a candy
bar. They can
give more than
one, if they
like.
4. The only
stipulation is
that it must be
accompanied

by a brief and
specific
explanation of
why.

**Here's
how ...**

5. Do not go in any order. Do not require anyone to give a candy bar. Let this be entirely voluntary.
6. You go first. Give a Kudos® bar to a participant. As

you do, explain
what that
person did to
receive the
bar.

7. Encourage the participants to follow your lead—
someone
(anyone) can
now give a
candy bar to
someone else.
8. Initiate a short
round of

applause for
the recipient
after each
award.

9. Continue until
the enthusiasm
dies down, or
until you run
out of candy
bars.

"Kudos to Vanessa for
helping me research that
billing error last
Thursday. She helped
me whittle down the
possible causes for the

**For
example**

...

error. I was able to get back to the customer with an answer much quicker than if I had worked on it by myself."

- How difficult (or easy) was it to give each other recognition?
Why?
- How does recognition from your peers differ from recognition you get from

Ask these questions

...

me?

- What do you think would happen if we gave feedback like this to colleagues outside our group (vendors, internal clients, suppliers, customers, support staff, etc.)?
- The first participant to

give a candy bar
may be
tentative, but
once the
concept catches
on, participants
often start
fighting over
who gets to
recognize whom
next (and isn't
that a wonderful
"fight" to have?).

- The recipient of the candy bar is never expected to give one to

someone else.
Let whoever
wants to give a
candy bar give
one. Do not
worry about
taking turns or
going in order.

- You may want to
tell one
participant about
the activity
beforehand and
ask him to be
prepared to
hand out a
candy bar after

you do, just to
get the ball
rolling.

- You can use this as a regular feature of your on-going staff meetings. It never gets old, and the participants will never run out of things to recognize and appreciate in each other.

**Tips for
success**

...

- Keep the recognition on par with the reward. If someone does something truly outstanding, perhaps something more than a candy bar is appropriate.
- Don't worry about everyone getting a candy bar. This is not about fairness. (Maybe those

who do not get one this time will think about why they did not get recognized, and change.) This is especially OK if you make this activity a regular or semiregular activity for the group.

- If someone gives a candy bar and is not specific, ask them to share

an example (not to "test" them, but to give the rest of the group an idea of what specifically is being recognized).

- You can use other small rewards besides Kudos® bars—perhaps something more relevant to your organization?

Try these variations

...

- Give a candy bar to each participant, and have each give it to someone else in recognition or appreciation.

Labels

This is ...

A planning activity in which participants treat each other differently based on written labels they wear on their foreheads.

The purpose is ...

Participants learn first hand how it feels to be treated a certain way because of generalizations or prejudices. They learn how this hampers good communication.

**Use this
when ...**

- The group needs to appreciate the diversity of its members better.
- Individuals are approaching each other, customers, partners, or others with preconceived notions about them.
- Labels and prejudices are

getting in the way of communication and collaboration.

- A set of six labels for each group. Labels should be large enough that participants can read them from several feet away.
- Labels can be directive, like

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

"disagree with
me," "ignore
me," "treat me
like the leader,"
"laugh at me,"
"respect my
opinions," "find
fault with me,"
"argue with me,"
"agree with me,"
"interrupt me,"
and so forth. Or,
they can be
simple labels,
such as
"arrogant,"
"helpful," "self-

promoting,"
"brown-noser,"
"cooperative," "a
pushover,"
"defensive,"
"leader," and so
forth.

1. Divide the group into teams of six.
2. Distribute a set of six labels to each team, face down.
3. Each team

member sticks
a label on the
forehead of
the person
next to him or
her.

4. All participants
can read what
is on others'
labels but not
their own. Do
not tell anyone
what is on his
or her own
label.
5. Give the teams

**Here's
how ...**

a task to plan (plan a departmental picnic, how they will participate in this year's community fund raiser, etc.). They will have 7 minutes to do this.

6. As they discuss, they must respect the label each participant is

wearing. React and respond according to what it says.

7. After 7 minutes, even if the task is not complete, stop the teams and discuss.

- What happened? Did you accomplish your task? Why or why not?

- How satisfied are you with the outcome? Why?
- How did you feel about treating people with these labels? (*It was not me; It felt forced; It was fun; etc.*)
Did it get easier over time?
Why? (*Others reinforced the label; I got used to treating her*

Ask these questions

...

that way; etc.)

- How did you feel about the way you were being treated?

(Frustrated, angry, puzzled, annoyed, etc.)

What was your reaction then? *(I fought harder; I disengaged; I treated him even worse; etc.)*

- What

implications
does this have
for us back on
the job?

- Use your judgment in dividing teams. For example, if you have 11 participants, remove one label from one set, and have one team of 6 and one team of 5 participants,

Tips for success

...

so that everyone can have the experience. If there are 13 participants, have a seventh label ready.

- Some people may be reluctant to adhere to the labels. As you observe, encourage participants to take the labels they see to heart and act

accordingly.

- Try different labels or different combinations of labels with different teams to explore various themes or dynamics.
- Precede this activity with an activity to reinforce creativity and individuality.

Try these variations

...

Have each participant make a paper hat from newsprint. Then affix the labels to their hats and have them wear them for this activity.

- Make the labels represent different stakeholders on a project or different types of customers and so forth.

- Have only one group of six to eight participants with labels do the task, while the rest of your group observes.
- Instead of planning a picnic, have the teams grapple with a real work-related problem or issue.

Rainbow of Diversity

This is ... An activity in which participants use crayons as a metaphor for their own diversity.

The purpose is ... Participants appreciate the similarities and differences among themselves.

- Individuals need to recognize and appreciate what's going *right* among them.

Use this when ...

- Individuals are not appreciating each other very well.
- Individuals need to bond together

Materials you'll need ...

- A different colored crayon for each participant (for a large group, get a large box of 64 crayons!).

1. Give a crayon

to each
participant.

2. Have them pair up with someone else whose crayon color is close to their own color.
3. They have 2 minutes to discover all the ways that they, as individuals, are similar to each other.

**Here's
how ...**

4. Have them pair up again, this time with someone whose crayon color is very different from their own color.
5. They now have 2 minutes to discover all the ways that they, as individuals, are different from each other.

6. Have the participants get in a circle, standing next to colors that are most like their own. This will make a sort of round rainbow. Conduct the Debrief while they are in this circle.

■ What did you

learn about the participant with a color similar to yours?

- What did you learn about the participant with a color different from yours?
- What does this circle say about our team? (*Even though I am standing next to someone similar, I am*

Ask these questions

...

*ultimately
connected to the
very different
person opposite
me in the circle;
We are one big
whole; etc)*

- What implications does this have for us back on the job?
- Do not let them get too worried about the

**Tips for
success**
...

"correct" closest
color or
opposite color.
Yes, green is
opposite red on
the color wheel,
but it is also
quite different
from black,
silver, orange,
pink, and many
other colors.

- Have the group
make a colorful
creation on a
flipchart page.
Make sure each

participant
contributes his
or her color.
How is each
color critical to
the success of
the whole? Does
each color have
to be used
equally for the
creation to be
beautiful?

- When the
participants pair
up with a color
close to theirs,
have them point

**Try these
variations**
...

out what
strengths they
have in common
that contribute
to the success
of the group.
When they pair
up with a
different color,
have them
identify what
each other's
strengths are
and how they
can learn from
or appreciate
those different

skills and
abilities.

What I like About Me

This is ...

A discussion activity in which participants tell each other what their own strengths are.

The purpose is ...

Participants realize how much they have to offer, how valuable they are to the team, and that it's OK to acknowledge their own accomplishments.

- Individuals need a boost of self-esteem.

Use this when ...

- Individuals are not feeling confident about their ability to get the job done.
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

Materials you'll need ...

- No materials are necessary for this activity.
1. Have the participants pair

up.

2. One partner will talk to the other one for 3 minutes nonstop about what they have accomplished at work lately.
3. If the speaker says anything that diminishes or minimizes their accomplishment, the listener will

**Here's
how ...**

say, "I object."
The speaker
must then
retract their
comment.

4. Other than that,
the listener may
not speak at all.
5. After 3 minutes,
reverse roles
and repeat.

Speaker: "I did a good job
on the XYZ account.
When they called and
asked me those tough
questions, at first I was

**For
example
...**

baffled. Then I asked Michael for help, and I felt more comfortable answering them. Of course, Michael probably could have handled it better without me, but at least I was able to..."

Listener: "I object!"

Speaker: "OK, scratch that. I was able to answer their questions with Michael's help. Period. Let's see, another thing I did was..."

- Which role was easier for you, the listener or the speaker? Why?
(Most will say the listener.)
- How did you feel about listening without being able to ask questions or contribute your own thoughts?
(Stifled, not part of the conversation, not sure I was

*understanding,
bored, etc.)*

Ask these questions

...

- How did you feel about speaking without being able to check in with your listener? *(Egotistical, not sure she was "with" me, unsure of myself, etc.)*
- What did you learn about how you feel about yourself? *(I need validation; I'm not*

*comfortable
acknowledging
my own
strengths; I put
too much [or too
little] emphasis
on what others
think of me; etc.)*

- How do you think this affects how you do your job?
- The hardest thing for the speakers will be talking continuously. They may hesitate to

**Tips for
success
...**

acknowledge their contributions. This may come out as they pause to "think of something good." Encourage the speakers to just keep talking. If they run out of things to talk about, tell them to go back in time and keep going back, even if they end up talking about things they

did 15 years ago.
The point is to
realize and
acknowledge their
own value and
contributions
without editing or
censoring.

- Add
competitiveness.
The listener gets
1 point every time
the speaker
pauses for more
than 5 seconds
and 5 points

every time the listener catches them with an "I object." Be prepared with small prizes for the winner. Ask later if the competitive pressure impacted the speaker.

- Limit the speakers' monologues to a specific project they have worked

Try these variations

...

on recently as a team. This will help them highlight the diverse and important contributions each has made to the success of the team.

- Limit the speakers' monologues to a specific organizational value or core competency. This

will help them reinforce those appropriate behaviors in themselves and in each other.

- Have the participants answer the discussion questions in their pairs, rather than in the larger group.

ZYX

This is ... A verbal activity in which the participants learn to say the alphabet backwards as quickly as they can say it forwards.

The purpose is ... Participants realize they have different learning styles, and they should take advantage of their preferred style when they learn new skills at work. This activity also builds confidence.

- Individuals are

facing a steep learning curve.

**Use this
when ...**

- The group lacks confidence to accomplish what is ahead of them.
- You don't have prep time and/or materials for anything more elaborate.

**Materials
you'll
need ...**

- No materials are necessary for this activity.

1. Ask the group to recite the alphabet with you. Do this at a decent speed, but do not rush through it.
2. Tell them that the objective is to be able to recite (which means no reading) the alphabet backwards as quickly as they

just did it
forwards.

**Here's
how ...**

3. Participants may use any resources available in the room (paper, each other, you, etc.) to get ready.
4. They have 12 minutes to prepare and practice.
5. Lead the group

in reciting the
alphabet
backwards at
the same
speed as you
did forwards.

**For
example
...**

Z, Y, X, W, V, U, T, S, R,
Q, P, O, N, M, L, K, J, I,
H, G, F, E, D, C, B, A.

- How did you feel
when you first
heard the
objective? (*This
is impossible;
This is silly; I
can't do it; etc.*)

**Ask these
questions
...**

- What strategy helped you prepare the most? (Look for indications of different learning styles.) Did you find you had to break the task into smaller pieces?
- Did you offer or seek help from others trying to learn the same skill? Why or why not?

- What other creative ways could we have used to help us learn together better?
- What implications does this have for us back on the job?
- People have different ways of

learning: some are visual (by seeing), some are auditory (by saying or singing), and others are kinesthetic (by moving) learners. Visual learners will do best to write the alphabet backwards and look at it over and over. Auditory learner

Tips for success

...

will do best by
trying to say,
sing, or just read
the alphabet
over and over.

Kines-thetic
learners will do
best by pacing,
doodling, or
otherwise
moving while
they rehearse.

Watch for
indications of
which style is
adopted
successfully by

whom.

- If you elect to have participants recite individually, be open to creative solutions. For example, when it is Karen's turn to recite, she may have a partner whisper the alphabet backwards in her ear as she repeats what

she hears aloud!

- For more competitive groups, have them individually recite the alphabet backwards. You may even want to time them. If the group is larger than six to eight people, divide them into smaller groups for the final, individual

Try these variations
...

reciting.

- Use the Pledge of Allegiance instead of the alphabet or (if it is short enough) your organization's mission statement.

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